

Full Length Research Paper

# The challenges of the customer services for modern market requests: A case study of "Telecom Serbia"

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A new review of telecommunication business in modern economic environment indicates that there is no existence without accepting modern marketing approach. There must be a strong focus on the organizational design, which create an internal environment that is supportive to the empowerment of customer centred employees. The goal of the research consisted in the identification of the internal factors for which it was assumed that they had a relevant impact on employees skills in customers services. The ground research of this study comprised a sample of the employees from all customer services of "Telecom Serbia" in Srem province of Serbia. The basic assumption was that there exist a correlation between internal marketing and employees skills, and this study has proved it. The scientific information from this article could be interesting for domestic telecommunication companies and their management and all services organizations.

**Key words:** Internal marketing, customer service, employee development, customer relationship management.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern way of life takes place in the service society. Service marketing and management are becoming more complex, and a customer represents a key resource in the modern service economy, and the most valuable property of a company. One of the main problems, which significantly influence the change of marketing philosophy in the field of services, is the customers role in the process of providing the service, as an accomplice in its production. The quality of the relationships between service organization and customers significantly influence the quality of providing the service, hence the service quality represents one of the key issues of not only operational, but marketing and human resource management as well. Relationships with the customers become a key task of not only the top management and staff for contact with the customers, but all the employees in a service organization also.

Modern business in the field of telecommunications are

conditioned by rapid changes of technology, convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting and computer and information technology, as well as the huge increase in the number of new products and services. The same is expected from the telecommunications operators and service suppliers, the efficient internal organization, organized scientific-research work, the possibility of the rapid acceptance of the new technologies, active management and monitoring the customer's requirements in order to obtain a better position at the national and international market.

### The purpose of the research

Selecting and engaging with the problems linked to the main issue, was initiated by the current situation in the national telecommunications sector. Liberalization and deregularization of the market has fostered the appearance of more operators in the field of mobile telephony and providing ADSL services. Purchasing a licence, another operator in the field of fixed telephony has announced soon entering the market, which will greatly

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influence the business of the operator who was dominant in this region so far, "Telecom Serbia". If we add to it that a recent announcement of the ownership structure transformation of "Telecom Serbia", and the transition from state to largely private property, the main issue becomes more actual. "Telecom Serbia" is going through one of its most important development periods. Therefore, all today's solutions should fit the requirements in the future to ensure the high availability of services and providing the modern business in all its elements. The focus is on redefining the existing services in terms of their diversification and also the introduction of the whole range of new services. However, there must be a strong focus on the organizational design, if there is a desire to implement the modern principles of business in an effective way, which put the customers with his requirements and wishes in the core of company.

Previous researches conducted in Serbia have identified two basic types of customer dissatisfaction: dissatisfaction with the quality of provided service and customers sense that a company is not so much interested in their needs and desires. The structure of employees in a customer service, which represent the front-line of a company, is composed of the employees that have so far worked according to the old, bureaucratic way of behaving and thinking, which resulted in the emergence of the problems in communication with the customers and therefore, in the quality of business. Today, buyers require the sellers who will be their consultants and who will be ready to provide them with the complete information about the required service or product at any moment. Since the mentioned service part, represents the company during the interactions with the customers, the main research question is how internal environment is supportive to the employees in the front-line of sale, and, whether the employees have the abilities and capacities for such a business that is required by the principles of CRM.

## **Theoretical framework**

A new approach to telecommunications business in modern economic environment indicates that there is no existence without accepting modern marketing approach, which, among the other elements, also implies the high level of owning CRM skills. CRM (customer relationship management) consists of creation, development, maintenance, optimalization and advancement of the long-term, mutually valued relationships between customers and organization. A successful CRM focuses on understanding the needs and desires of buyers and it is achieved by implementation of this necessity to the core of business through the integration with the strategy of organization, people, technology and business processes (Fox, Stead, 2001). CRM basically means fundamental changes in the way in which companies are organized

(Ryals and Knox, 2001) and business processes are conducted (Hoffman and Kashmeri, 2000).

Chronologically speaking, there is a number of recognized names and authors who define CRM in their own way. Jackson (1985) under CRM means "marketing orientation on strong, lasting relationships with individual values". Payne (2000) believes that CRM is engaged with "creation, development and strengthening the individual relationships with the clients, with carefully targeted clients, as well as client groups, resulting in the maximization of their total value for the user". Cotler and Armstrong (2004) define CRM as "the overall process of building and maintaining the profitable relationships with customers, delivery of superior value and satisfaction for the user". Building the firm relationships with the users is a prerequisite for creating the competitive advantage of the organization (Mckenna, 1991). Although the mentioned definitions differ in some elements, their common denominator is in the focus on the individual, long-term buyer-seller relationships, from which both sides have the benefits. The 90's of the last century are characterized by the tendency to integrated observation of marketing, sale, managing distribution channels, technology and logistics support with the aim of increasing users' satisfaction. Reichheld (1990) emphasizes the relationships with buyers as essentially important for organizational performances in the sense that establishing long-term relationships increases company's profit. Accordingly, Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) suggest that the cost of retaining current clients is much lower than the costs of recruiting the new ones. In the same way, Reichheld (1993) concludes that the economic benefits from high loyalty are important, and they explain the differences between companies in terms of effectiveness costs in many industries.

Berry and Persuraman (1991) observed that managing the relationships with buyers comes down to care, attraction, development and retaining the relationships with customers. Berry emphasizes that the attracting of new buyers should only be observed as an indirect step in the marketing process. Strengthening the relationships, transforming the indifferent buyers to loyal, as well as treating a consumer as a client should be considered as marketing. Buyers are more and more interested in forming the individual relationships with the representatives of organizations (Berry, 1995). The users can acquire social benefits from the long-term relationships with service providers (Czepiel, 1990). In addition to the benefits from basic services, the users also get a unique sort of friendly relationships, which gives them a sense of comfort and safety. Such feelings reduce the anxiety and increase the confidence in the provider. The above-mentioned suggests that services should be viewed as performances in which the employees, based on experience, play a major role in forming the provision of services (Bitner, 1995).

When it is generally spoken of a well-structured and

established organization design, able to implement the CRM principles in the right way, the attention must be paid to the following:

(i) Organizational structure: The structural design of organization must be such that it optimizes the relationships with the buyers in the most efficient way, which includes the establishing of user-focused teams (Sheth and Sisodia, 2002), multi disciplinary team segments as well as multi functional teams (Ryals and Knox, 2001). All these structural designs require a strong interfunctional coordination and interfunctional integration (Sheth et al., 2000).

(ii) Extensive resource commitment: Success in acquiring new users, retaining the existing as well as developing the relationships with them, depends on company's commitment with its time and resources in the direction of identifying and satisfying the essential needs of the users (Nykamp, 2001).

(iii) Human resources management: Strategy, people, technologies and processes are of a vital significance for CRM, but the employees as individuals are the ones who make up the foundation of relationships with the customers when providing service encounters (McGovern and Panaro, 2004).

According to Krauss (2002), the most difficult part for an organization to become CRM-oriented is not the technology but people. The management of the business must create an internal environment that is supportive to the empowerment of customer centred employees. Every interaction between the internal customer and the business of management must focus on service delivery and need satisfaction (Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Low job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are barriers to ability utilization and goal achievement (Zihni Eyupoglu and Saner, 2009).

## METHODOLOGY

### The goal and the tasks

In accordance with the presented organizational design and considering the reasons for the dissatisfaction of users, as well as their opinion about the quality level of service providing, the goal of the research consisted of the identification of the factors for which it was assumed that they had a relevant impact on the level of skills and training of the employees in customer services of "Telecom Serbia". Structured like this, the goal of the research was focused on two tasks:

- (i) determining the level of skills and training of the employees in customer services of "Telecom Serbia" based on their self-assessments and subjective opinions;
- (ii) to which extent the training programs, quality of vertical and horizontal communication, as well as the system of employees's performance evaluation within an organization, influence the level of employees interaction effectiveness in customer services with the users of their services.

Enquiring the employees in customer services of "Telecom Serbia", it was attempted to make a diagnosis of self-assessed skills and

knowledge, as well as the factors that influence their development, and also the quality of service providing and interaction with users.

### Hypotheses

Based on the presented problem, goal and task of the research, the main hypothesis, on which the research on the main topic is based, was designed:

H<sub>1</sub>: The employees believe that they are trained for the work they perform.

H<sub>2</sub>: The employees believe that the quality of their interaction with the users of services is proportional to the quality of training program, level of vertical and horizontal communication in organization and the system of evaluating work efficiency.

### Sample

Sample consisted of all the employees in customer services of "Telecom Serbia" on the territory of "Srem" region, which can be considered as a representative sample of a company according to many criteria. Observing the age structure of respondents, the highest percentage (40%) makes the age group of 46 - 55 years, it is followed by the age group of 36 - 45 years with 34%, while the population under the age of 35 years represents 26% of respondents. Data in Figure 1. represent the respondent segmentation based on their work experience acquired in the contacts with the users:

### Research methods

As the most optimal instrument for subject research, a questionnaire that contained two groups of questions was used:

- (i) the first group of questions referred to the subjective evaluation of the employees in customer service on the level of skills, training in service processes;
- (ii) the second group of questions included the employees' evaluation of the impact of specific elements of managing and development such as training programs, the levels of vertical and horizontal communication, system of performance evaluation and rewarding, on the behavior of employees at work.

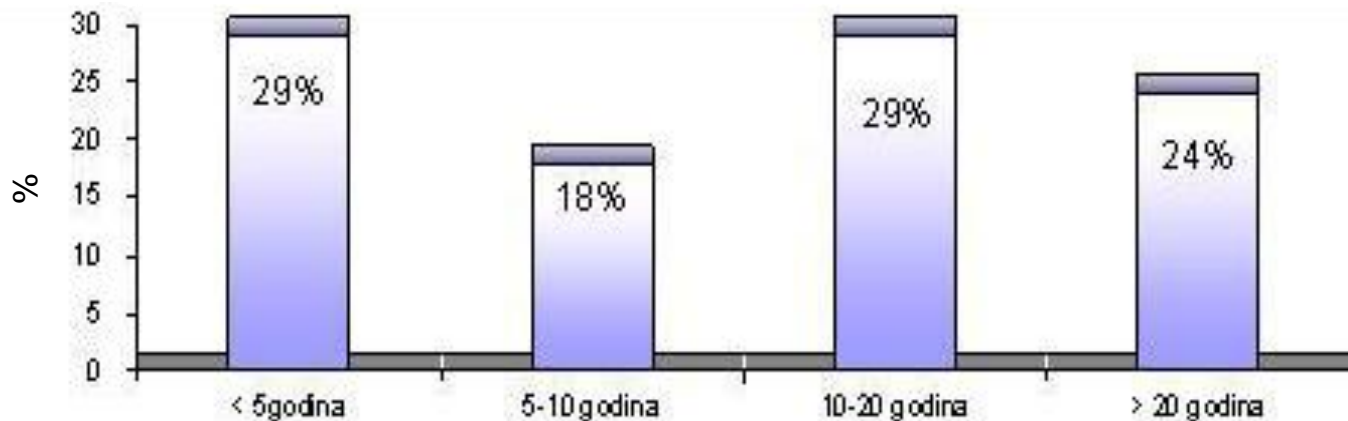
### The applied method of statistical analysis of data

Considering the complexity of the research task, processing the obtained data was carried out through more statistical methods and tests:

- (i) determining the significance of elements correlation by applying  $\chi^2$ - test;
- (ii) determining the level of elements correlation using the Pearson contingency test;
- (iii) analyzing the correlation between modality elements of examined indicators of behavior in the company by applying the correspondent factor analysis;
- (iv) determining the distance (closeness) between the elements of modalities with the focus on those in which case there is no significant correlation, observed in general, but there is significant closeness of individual modalities.

## RESULTS

The conception of questionnaire contained in the



**Figure 1.** Structure of the employees based on the years of working in contact with the customers.

research, as well as the way of analyzing the obtained responses, have generated the two sets of information of relevant significance to the set hypotheses and tasks of the research. The employees were questioned on their opinions and views regarding the factors within organization for which it was supposed to have an important impact on the level of work skills and training for work assignments. Obtained responses were tested through many kinds of statistical analysis, in order to obtain reliable information regarding the opinions and views of the employees on relevant factors to their work skills and level of training.

### Level of work skills

When examining the employees in customer service in relation to their subjective assessment on how high is the level of their business skills, 68% have the attitude that they have the right solution for the user in most situations, 12% think that they can provide basic services only, while 20% have stated that they are ready for all the challenges that are accompanying service providing. This analysis has generated 3 modalities of self-assessed skills of employees who were placed in relationship with each chosen factor in further research. It was taken as an assumption that training programs, transfer of information within the organization, self-education, the way of solving problems and work assignments, work meetings, quality of horizontal and vertical level within the company, as well as the evaluation of achieved results can have the major impact on the level of work skills. Each of the mentioned factors was analysed separately, especially in order to determine how much and what kind of impact it has on the skills of the employees.

In the analysis of the correlation between attitudes on self-assessed skills of the employees and quality of the training programme, considering the value  $p = 0,773 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can say that the correlation received is not significantly expressed that is the correlation was not

determined by this method. Also, when determining the degree of correlation, using the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between modality of employees' skills and modality of training programme quality was observed -  $\chi^2_{cor} = 0,263$ . The above-mentioned indicates that the existing training system in the company has no significant influence on the level of job skills of the employees, which results in the doubt as to their quantity and quality. Considering the structure of respondent's answers related to the correlation of employees' skills modalities and training programme modalities, a high percentage of employees, who consider that the trainings are realized in a small number or even that those programs are negligible, is noticed. The next element in the range of internal factors, whose impact on the employees' skills was analysed, was linked to the information transfer within organization. Considering the structure of respondents' answers related to the connection between employees' skills modality and information transfer modality, a high percent of employees who consider that they are untimely informed about new decisions, guidelines and procedures can be noticed, while slightly more than a third of employees in customer service believe that the information flow is at a satisfactory level (Table 1).

In the analysis of correlation between attitudes on employees' skills and information flow, a relationship between modality prepared to all the challenges with satisfaction in information transfer, modality higher level of skills with untimely information and modality ability of providing basic services with unsatisfaction in relation to information transfer is determined. Considering the value  $p = 0,001 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is significantly expressed i.e. that the correlation between the perception of desirable employees' skills and information transfer with a moderate maximum connection 0,514 is determined. Also, when determining the degree of correlation by applying the Pearson contingency test, the correlation between employees' skills modality and information transfer

**Table 1.** Relationship between modalities of self-assessment of employees's skills and information transfer.

	Satisfied (%)	Untimely informed (%)	Unsatisfied (%)
Prepared for the challenges	10.29	10.29	0
Higher level	25.00	38.24	4.41
Provision of basic services	0	5.88	5.88

**Table 2.** Relationship between modalities of employees's skills self-assessment and self- education.

	Satisfaction (%)	Uncertainty (%)	Aversion (%)
Prepared for the challenges	14.71	5.88	0
Higher level	44.12	19.12	4.41
Provision of basic services	5.88	4.41	1.47

**Table 3.** Relationship between modalities of employees's skills self-assessment and the way of problem-solving.

Modality	Consulting colleagues and managers (%)	Consulting manager (%)	Consulting colleagues (%)	Independently (%)
Prepared for all the challenges	13.24	2.94	2.94	1.47
Higher level	63.24	0	0	4.41
Provision of basic services	11.76	0	0	0

transfer modality was observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.562$ . Analyzing the modality closeness according to frequency of response, it was concluded that the employees, who consider themselves prepared to respond to each challenge, are satisfied with information transfer, the employees who believe that they possess a high level of experience and skills think that they are untimely informed, while those employees who consider that they are able to provide basic services only, express dissatisfaction regarding the information transfer. Observing the structure of respondents' answers related to the correlation between modalities of impression about the level of skills and modalities of self-education, the largest percentage of employees sees self-education as satisfaction and challenge, while a small percentage of employees are hostile to it (Table 2)

The data on table present and explains the analysis of correlation between self-assessment of employees' skills and self-education, the connection between modality prepared for all the challenges regarding the self-education as satisfaction, modality higher level of skills regarding self-education as uncertainty and modality ability to provide basic services with aversion to self-education is noticeable. Considering the value  $p = 0.054 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that there exists a moderate correlation between the level of employees' skills and self-education with a low-multiple maximum correlation 0.400. Also, when determining the degree of correlation,

applying the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between modality of employees' skills level and modality of self-education -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.513$  was observed. Analyzing the closeness of modalities according to frequency of responses indicates the closeness of modalities of the employees who consider that they possess a high level of experience and skills with regarding self-education as satisfaction and challenge. Observing the structure of respondents' answers related to the correlation of modality of impression about the level of skills with modalities of the way of solving problem, the highest percentage of employees decides to consult with both his manager and colleagues, when solving some unusual problem (Table 3). As  $p = 0.009 \chi^2$ , it can be said that there is a correlation between responses to these two attitudes. Considering the value  $p = 0.009 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is significantly expressed i.e that the correlation between self-assessment of employees' skills and information transfer was determined by this method, with a moderate maximum correlation 0.495.

Also, when determining the degree of correlation by applying the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between modalities of employees' skills self-assessment and the way of problem solving was observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.550$ . According to the frequency of responses, the closeness of employees' modalities who consider that they possess a high level of experience and skills with

**Table 4.** Relationship between modalities of employees's skills self-assessment and need for meetings.

Modality	Yes, but there aren't any (%)	Not often (%)	No (%)
Prepared for all the challenges	8.82	10.29	1.47
Higher level	27.94	36.76	2.94
Provision of basic services	11.76	0	0

**Table 5.** Relationship between modalities of employees's skills self-assessment and communication quality.

Modality	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Low (%)
Prepared for all the challenges	1.47	8.82	10.29	0
higher level	1.47	16.18	16.18	33.82
provision of basic services	0	0	2.94	8.82

**Table 6.** Relationship between modalities of employees' skills self-assessment and obtained results evaluation.

Modality	Adequate to work (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Inadequate (%)	Degrading (%)
Prepared for all the challenges	1.47	4.41	11.76	2.94
Higher level	1.47	16.18	42.65	7.35
Provision of basic services	0	4.41%	4.41	2.94

the attitude to consult with both the manager and colleagues when solving a problem was observed. Opinions and attitudes of employees considering the work meetings have shown a high interest for them (Table 4). As  $p= 0.043 \chi^2$ , it can be said that there exists low correlation of responses to these two attitudes. Considering the value  $p= 0.043 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is expressed that is, the correlation between employees' skills and meetings was determined by this method with a low maximum correlation 0.376. Also, when determining the degree of correlation by applying the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between employees' skills modality and meetings modality was observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.436$ . Analysis of modality closeness according to the frequency of responses has shown that all the employees, regardless of their own subjective evaluation of their own skills, have a tendency to meetings, for which they believe that they are not being held in a required number. Observing the structure of respondents' answers related to the correlation between modality of impression of the skill level and modality of employees' attitude on horizontal and vertical communication, it is visible that the largest number of employees in the customer sector sees this relationship as one of the low quality (Table 5).

As  $p= 0.014 \chi^2$ , it can be said that there exists a moderate correlation of responses to these two attitudes. Considering the value  $p= 0.014 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is expressed i.e. that a correlation between employees' skills and

communication quality is determined, with moderate correlation 0.474. Also, when determining the degree of correlation by the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between employees' skills and communication quality is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.535$ . Closeness analysis of modalities according to the frequency of responses has shown that those employees, who consider themselves prepared to respond to each challenge, consider the horizontal and vertical communication quality very good, while the employees who believe to possess a high level of experience and skills consider these communications low quality. Observing the structure of respondents' answers related to the correlation between modalities of skills self-assessment and modalities of employees' attitudes on the evaluation of the results obtained, it is noticeable that the largest number of custom service members considers the evaluation inadequate to the results of invested work (Table 6). Considering the value  $p= 0.735 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is not significantly expressed i.e. that the correlation between employees' skills and work effects evaluation of the employees is not determined by this method. When determining the correlation degree by the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between employees' skills and training programme modalities is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,273$ . When analyzing the closeness of modalities according to the responses' frequency, it is observed that all the employees, regardless of the subjective self-assessment of skill level, consider the evaluation of work effects and rewarding

**Table 7.** Relationship between modalities of employees' training self-assessment and information transfer.

Modality	Satisfied (%)	Untimely informed (%)	Dissatisfied (%)
Fully trained	7.35	8.82	1.47
Well-trained	17.65	27.94	1.47
Average trained	10.29	17.65	4.41
Under-trained	0	0	2.94

inadequate and even degrading compared to the work results.

### Training for work tasks

In the case of employees' training level analysis as well, it was supposed that the group of dominant factors includes the training quality, information transfer within organization, self-education, the way of solving problems and work tasks, holding meetings, quality of horizontal and vertical communication within the company, as well as the valuation of obtained results. In this case also, each factor is individually analysed with the aim of determining its strength and the way in which it influences the level of employees' training in customer services. When questioning the employees in customer service in relation to their subjective evaluation on how high is their level of training for work tasks, 47% of them believe that they possess a level of good training, 3% believe that they are insufficiently trained, 18% believe that they are completely trained, while 32% have declared as average trained. This analysis has served for generating 4 modalities of employees based on their training level self-assessment, which are mixed with presumed factors in further analysis. When analysing the structure of employees' responses linked to subjective attitudes on training level modality and training quality modality correlation, considering the value  $p= 0.342 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is not significantly expressed i.e. that the correlation between attitudes related to the employees' training and training programme is not determined. When determining the degree of correlation by applying the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between modality of employees' training and training programme modality was observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.415$ . As with the examination of relevant factors for employees' skills, the mentioned analysis and data indicate that the existing system of trainings in a company has no significant impact on the level of employees' skills, which results in doubting in their quantity and quality. Observing the respondents' answers structure related to the correlation of employees' skills modality and training programme modality, it is noticeable that the employees who consider themselves completely trained believe that the themes of trainings are inadequate, well trained mostly believe that the training programme is negligible, while those employees

who classify themselves as average trained believe that the number of trainings is very small. Observing the respondents' answers structure related to the correlation of subjective attitudes on the level of training modality and the information transfer modality, a high percentage of employees who are partially satisfied, i.e. who consider themselves untimely informed is noticeable, while 35% of them are satisfied with information transfer (Table 7)

In the analysis of attitudes correlation on the training of staff in relation to training programme realization, a correlation between well trained with satisfying information transfer modality and under-trained with unsatisfactory information transfer modality is noticeable. Considering the value  $p= 0.003 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is expressed i.e. that the correlation between employees' training and information transfer is determined by this method, with a moderate maximum correlation 0.536. Also, when determining the correlation degree using the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between employees' training and information transfer modalities is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0.581$ . When analyzing the closeness of modalities based on the frequency of responses, it is noticeable that the employees who are considered well trained and the employees who belong to the group of average trained, when it comes to information transfer, have the attitude that they are untimely informed, while those employed who consider themselves fully trained believe that the information transfer is good. On the other hand, the employees who have classified themselves in the group of under-trained, have expressed the dissatisfaction in relation to the information transfer. Analysis of attitudes correlation on employees' training in relation to self-learning indicate the correlation of the fully trained with aversion to self-education modality and under-trained with uncertainty modality (Table 8). As  $p= 0.429 \chi^2$  – of the test, it can be said that a slight correlation between employees' training and self-education is determined by this method.

Also, when determining the correlation degree by applying the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between employees' training modality and self-education modality is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,347$ . Analyzing the closeness of some modalities according to the frequency of responses, it was noticeable that the employees, who consider themselves fully trained and average trained, think of self-education as of a satisfaction and a challenge, while those employees who clarify themselves

**Table 8.** Relationship between modalities of employees' training self-assessment and self-education.

Assessment	Satisfaction (%)	Uncertainty (%)	Aversion (%)
Fully trained	14.71	1.47	1.47
Well trained	26.47	19.12	1.47
Average trained	22.06	7.35	2.94
Under-trained	1.47	1.47	0

**Table 9.** Relationship between modalities of employees' training self-assessment and the way of work tasks solving.

Modality	Consulting colleagues and management (%)	Consulting management (%)	Consulting colleagues (%)	Independently (%)
Fully trained	14.71	1.47	0	1.47
Well-trained	39.71	1.47	1.47	4.41
Average trained	30.88	0	1.47	0
Under-trained	2.94	0	0	0

**Table 10.** Relationship between modalities of employees' training self-assessment and the meetings.

Modality	Yes but there aren't any (%)	Yes but not often (%)	No (%)
Fully trained	7.35	10.29	0
Well-trained	17.65	26.47	2.94
Average trained	20.59	10.29	1.47
Under-trained	2.94	0	0

classify themselves in the groups of fully trained and under-trained, see self-education as uncertainty and something unknown in the final outcome. Observing the structure of respondents' answers in relation to the correlation of subjective attitudes on the level of training modalities with the way of solving problems modalities, the percentage of employees who choose to consult both the colleagues and manager when solving an unusual problem is convincing. (Table 9). As  $p = 0,839 \chi^2$  – of the test, it can be said that the correlation between employees' training and problem solving is not determined by this method. When determining the correlation degree by applying the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between employees' training modality and the way of problem solving modality is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,301$ . Closeness analysis of modalities, according to frequency of responses, indicates that all the responses offered in employees' training modality, when solving a problem, choose consultations with both the colleagues and the manager. The next thing interesting to examine is how much importance do the employees give and how much need do they have for meetings and consultations (Table 10).

In the analysis of correlation of attitudes on employees' training in relation to meetings supporters, a correlation between well-trained modality with supporters of not often meetings and under-trained modality with the supporters

of the meetings that do not happen is observed. As  $p = 0,336 \chi^2$  – of the test, it can be said that a correlation between employees and supporters of meetings is not determined by this method. When determining the correlation degree by the application of the Pearson contingency test, a slight correlation between employees' training modality and meeting supporters modality is observed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,370$ . When analyzing the closeness of modalities according to frequency of responses, it is evident that the largest part of employees give the importance to meetings and has need for them, but also share the opinion that they very rarely happen. Observing the structure of respondents' answers according to the correlation between modalities of subjective attitudes on the level of training with modalities of horizontal and vertical communication quality, a significant percentage of employees who see the mentioned communication as bad one is noticeable. (Table 11). Considering the value  $p = 0,042 \chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that the obtained relationship is expressed i.e. that the correlation between employees' training and communication quality is determined by this method, with moderate maximum correlation 0,401.

Also, when determining the degree of correlation by the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between employees' training modality and communication quality modality is evident -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,522$ . Closeness analysis of



**Table 11.** Relationship between modalities of training self-assessment and quality of communication.

Modality	Very good (%)	Good (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Bad (%)
Fully trained	0	5.88	5.88	5.88
Well-trained	2.94	14.71	16.18	13.24
Average trained	0	4.41	7.35	20.59
Under-trained	0	0	0	2.94

**Table 12.** Relationship between modalities of employees' training self-assessment and achieved results evaluation.

Modality	Adequate to work (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Inadequate (%)	Degrading (%)
Fully trained	0	2.94	11.76	2.94
Well-trained	1.47	11.76	27.94	5.88
Average trained	1.47	10.29	19.12	1.47
Under-trained	0	0	0	2.94

modalities according to the frequency of responses indicates that the employees who consider themselves fully trained have the attitude that the communication quality is good, the employees who are in the category of well-trained believe that the quality of communication is satisfactory, while those who classify themselves in the group of average trained consider the communication bad. Observing the structure of respondents' answers in relation to correlation between modalities of subjective attitudes on the training level and modalities of the work effects and rewarding evaluation system, a high percentage of employees who consider the evaluation and rewarding inadequate to achieved results is evident (Table 12). As  $p = 0,069 \chi^2$  – of the test, it can be said that there exists a correlation, with an increased concluding risk, between evaluation of employees' training and system of achieved results valuation, with a moderate multiple correlation 0,466. Also, when determining the correlation degree by application of the Pearson contingency test, a correlation between employees' training modality and system of achieved results valuation modality was noticed -  $\chi_{cor} = 0,503$ . When analyzing the modality closeness according to frequency of responses, it was noticed that all the employees, regardless of whether they classify themselves in the group of highly trained or they are of weak performances, consider that the evaluation of work efforts and rewarding is inadequate and even degrading as compared to work results.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis presented in detail had as a goal an illustration of employees' self-assessment and the level of internal organizations impact on the level of skills and employees' training in customer service. Considering the the values " $p$ "  $\chi^2$  – of the test, we can conclude that in

the cases of examining the correlation with modalities of information transfer, self-education, the way of problem solving, work meetings, horizontal and vertical communication level, as well as valuation system, the obtained relationships are expressed, i.e. that a more significant correlation was determined by this applied statistical method. With the modalities that referred to the training programs, there was no significant correlation determined between them and the employees' skills modalities. The analysis and data mentioned indicate that the existing training system in a company has no significant impact on the level of employees' work skills, which indicates the disadvantages in terms of choice and quality of training and training programe realization. Applying the analysis of modality closeness, according to the frequency of responses, individual attitudes have been identified from particular modalities as well as their closeness to particular attitudes from the other modality:

- (i) The employees who consider themselves prepared for all challenges have the attitude that the training programs are negligible, that the information transfer is on satisfactory level, when solving unusual problems, they consult the manager, self-education see as a challenge and satisfaction, communication see on the satisfactory level, and the evaluation of work results, they see as an inadequate.
- (ii) A part of employees, who believe to possess a high level of communication skills for training programs, considers that they are realized in a small percentage, they feel untimely informed, consider that communication is on a low level, they realize self-education as a challenge and satisfaction, they solve unusual problems together with the manager, and the evaluation of work results and rewarding consider inadequate.
- (iii) The part of employees, who believe that they are able to provide basic services, are dissatisfied with information transfer, they believe that the training programs are

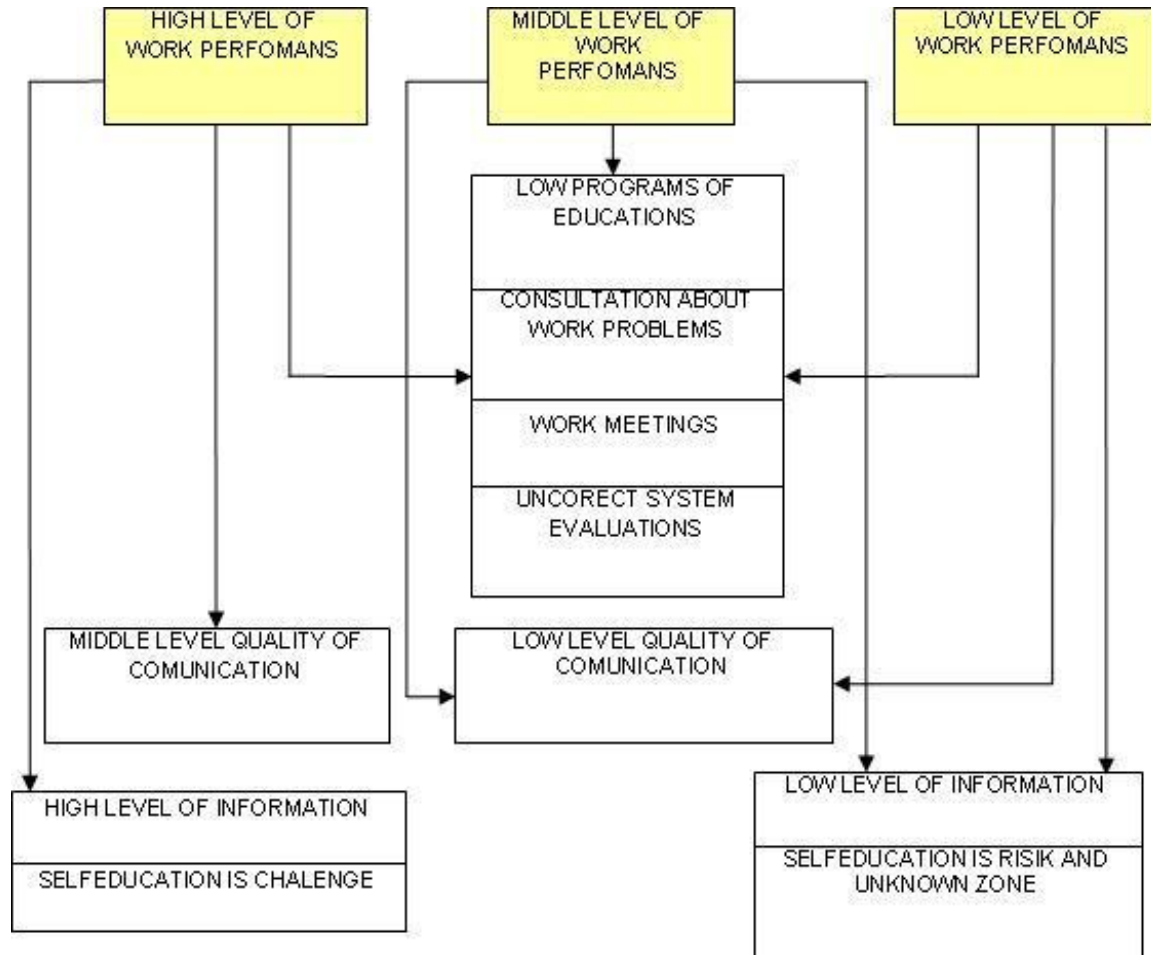


Figure 2. Behavior model of customer service employees

realized in a small percentage, they realize self-education as uncertainty and something unknown, they have a necessity for the work meetings, and they believe that there is not enough meetings held, they have the attitude that communication is not functioning, and consider the evaluation of work results and rewarding inadequate.

(iv) A part of employees in customer service, who consider themselves fully trained, believe that the training themes are inadequate, they are satisfied with information transfer, realize self-education as a challenge and satisfaction, they are the supporters of work meetings, they solve the unusual problems in cooperation with the manager, see the quality of communication as good, and evaluation of work results as inadequate.

(v) The employees who believe to be well-trained have the attitude that training programs are negligible, that they are untimely informed, they see self-education as something unknown, have a positive attitude towards the meetings, believe that communication is on a low level, in case of unusual problems they consult the manager, and the evaluation of work results and rewarding see as inadequate.

(vi) A part of employees that consider themselves average trained, believe that the number of training programs is small, that they are untimely informed, they realize self-education as a challenge, have the necessity for the meetings which are not held often enough, unusual problems solve with the manager, see the communication on a low level, and evaluation of work results and rewarding as inadequate.

Based on the data shown, there can be presented a model of attitudes and behavior of customer service staff (Figure 2). The data presented indicate that the employees in customer service, who have classified themselves to the groups of fully trained, prepared for all the challenges, have the attitude that the training programs are negligible, they are satisfied with information transfer, believe that vertical and horizontal communication function at satisfactory level, and see self-education as a challenge and satisfaction. They have an occasional need for meetings, when solving unusual problems they consult the managers, while the evaluation system of work effects and rewarding, they consider

inadequate. Although, they consider the program realization minimum or even negligible, they compensate this significant disadvantage through the processes of self-education, which represent a satisfaction and challenge to them. Also, through consultations with managers, satisfactory information transfer as a good cooperation through horizontal communications, they compensate the lack of educational programs and manage to provide the adequate service for the user.

A part of employees who consider themselves well-trained, with a high level of communication skills, have the attitude that training programs have the inadequate theme and that they are realized in a small number, as regards the information transfer they consider themselves untimely informed, and for vertical and horizontal communication they believe to be at a low level. They are the supporters of meetings, they usually regard self-education as uncertainty and something unknown, they solve the unusual problems together with managers, and see the evaluation of work effects and rewarding as inadequate or in some cases, even degrading. Besides regarding the training programs as negligible and the attitude that they are not timely informed in information transfer, they believe to be able to provide the user with a satisfactory service quality through self-education and consultations with manager and the need for work meetings. A part of employees who consider themselves average trained, prepared to provide basic services, have expressed dissatisfaction as regards the training programs, as well as information transfer and quality of horizontal and vertical communication. They are the supporters of meetings that are not held, they restrain themselves when it comes to self-education, when solving the unusual problems they consult the manager, and they see the evaluation system of achieved results as inadequate or even degrading. Considering that they are dissatisfied with information transfer, quality of conducting the trainings, number of work meetings as well as communication within an organization, they see their level of skills and training as a logical consequence of the mentioned set of circumstances.

Our assumption contained in  $H_1$ , where the employees consider themselves trained for the job they perform is partially sustainable. The highest percentage of employees consider themselves trained to the extent that they are able to provide the satisfactory level of services, while one fifth of employees has declared that they are fully trained and prepared for all the challenges.  $H_2$ , in which case it was assumed that the level of effectiveness of employees interaction in customer service with the users depending on the quality of the training program, horizontal and vertical communication level, as well as the valuation system of employees, was completely proved. A high percentage of average trained employees, as well as the significant percentage of employees with a low level of work performances are, in fact, a result of bad training programs, poor flow of information and

communications within an organization, as well as inadequate system of work effects evaluation. For the employees who have self-assessed themselves to have a high level of skills and training, it is indicative that they are prone to self-education, frequent consultations and opinion exchange with the colleagues and searching for more information. These interests largely contribute the capacity increase of their work performances, which makes them far more prepared for business challenges than the other employees in customer services. The presented results indicate the fact that despite the awareness of competitive environment and the tendency for implementation of modern business principles, management of "Telecom Serbia" did not create an organizational design, which improves the work performances of the employees when they interact with the users. Instead, the employees in customer services are to a large extent left to themselves when it comes to building and expanding their work skills and training, which implicates an insufficient level of service performances and user's dissatisfaction as a consequence.

## Conclusion

The above-mentioned research, as well as the obtained results indicate the "gap" between the current functioning of internal processes in "Telecom Serbia" and the necessary performances of organizational design, which enables and improves the successful implementation of CRM. Rare training programs with inadequate themes, poor information flow within an organization, unclearly defined horizontal and vertical communication, create a negative reflection on the effectiveness of work among the members of customer service. Also, inadequate system of evaluation of work effects and results contributes the creation of demotivation of employees in the first line of sale. All of this implicates that the communication performances of employees in customer services are far from those necessary for a successful realization of CRM principles.

In order to reduce the above-mentioned gap as much as possible and create suitable organizational conditions for the successful realization of CRM, it is necessary that the employees in customer services have, besides permanent and various trainings, a good information flow in both directions, as well as a more frequent cooperation with colleagues and managers, either through work meetings or direct consultations during the performance of work tasks. In addition, a realistic assessment of achieved results as well as the setting of an objective and fair system of rewarding. Self-assessment of employees is considered one of the possible way of evaluating the effectiveness in performing a job. The method chosen is not the most precise one, but it is of a great benefit in conditions of big organizational changes and the critical spots in functioning of employees can be indicated by it.

The results we have obtained, we consider a starting point to further work with the employees, and their subjective points of view an assistance in establishing a desirable behavior on the level of organization.

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