

Assignment 1:
Research-based Practice Report.

Q(1). Leadership & Management Practices in Incumbent Organization.
(4000 words).

**DOES AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IMPROVE CUSTOMER
COMPLAINT EFFICACY?**



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Signed:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper poses the question, “does authentic leadership improve customer complaint efficacy?”, and to that effect what problem areas are there within complaint divisions of different organizations and how can an individual’s deeply held value affect procedures. Beginning this paper the clear distinctions are made of what an authentic business may benefit from its cohesiveness. Normative complaint handling procedures are outlined at the start of this paper, and by examining such protocols a clarification of the issues present becomes all the more apparent.

Authenticity is seen as a strategic concept that may be moulded and shaped to a certain extent. The concept of ‘deep acting’ is touched upon as a creative way to feign authenticity to suit an organization’s needs, however, it is the concept of being genuinely authentic that is the key area of focus within this paper. A list of strategies for organizations to obtain competitive positions is made available. Scenarios of ‘voicing’ from within are examined in order to determine organization authentic behaviour.

The nature of complaints and authenticity is covered and authenticity is put into context as to what is analysed in this paper. Customer behaviour, in relations to authenticity, and the main reason why organizations need authenticity is thoroughly analysed - this in order to lead up to the methodical procedures undertaken in surveying a number of organizations. Three surveys were obtained pertaining to three individuals whose part of their jobs was the active dealing with complaints.

Three organizations are contrasted side by side, and the degree of authenticity within each incumbent individual is contrasted so as to determine a correlation between complaint handling efficacy and the openness of each. It becomes easily established that indeed a trend may hold, and that organizations may be undergoing discriminative employment of individual’s based on their values alignment. The end result is inconclusive as the dismal number of survey respondents does not justify confirmation of the trends.

INTRODUCTION

Authentic businesses generate profits, and function, through pursuit of a positive and profound purpose. They blossom where conventional competitors flounder. It is only logical to deduce that the presence of authentic leading, within the complaints department of an organization, may insinuate correct handling procedures.

In examining a certain pool of applicants, with direct involvement with complaints, various traits shall be contrasted in order to discern the influence of Authenticity from within the company. It should be noted that authentic organizations have three inherent traits, these are:

1. Better decision making as people are emotionally connected with what they do and can trust and use their intuition.
2. More motivation because people care about what they are doing.
3. Support from outside the company because other people care about what you are doing. (Croft, 2005)

Authentic businesses have a purpose of which their suppliers, customers, and staff can support and align with – it is postulated that these differences will be discernable when examining complaint procedures of different organizations. Were an organization to be authentic then it may be plausible that certain key traits would be passed to the complaints department through shared culture and work environment. Authentic businesses ought to demonstrate their nature through their interaction with society and the environment by exhibiting behaviour that will not necessarily benefit them financially but indeed lead to support of the firm's true purpose. (Croft, 2005)

Authentic businesses' ought to be true to the commitments of the organization, and in doing so they would implement effective complaint handling procedures. An effective complaints handling procedure should entail the following (Foster, 2007):

Accessibility – It ought to be easy for the complainant to lodge his opinion, that is, details should be readily available indicating on how to lodge a complaint, i.e.: Website, brochures, friendly supportive staff.

Simplicity – The system should be straightforward with as few steps as possible.

Time scales – Complaints should be generally resolved within 30 days, a relative short time scale.

Acknowledgement – When responding to a complaint a simple letter stating who is handling the complaint, alongside the time it should take, should be included.

Independence – The complaint handler should not be biased in relation to the complaint, and the complainant ought to be able to pursue the complaint to upper management if so desired.

Confidentiality – All complaints should be treated in confidence as far as possible, this in accordance to acts pertaining to protection of personal information.

ESSENTIALS OF COMPLAINTS

- The date the complaint was made.
- A brief description of the complaint.
- Response details for the complainant.
- Who dealt with the complaint. (Foster, 2007)

Efficacy of an authentic complaints procedure may be indicated by the exhibition of the following benefits:

- Reduced costs
- Better risk management
- Promotional of personal wellbeing
- Better quality assurance
- More satisfied customers (Foster, 2007)

The question remains, how do we determine if an organization is behaving authentically within their complaints department? In this paper we interviewed a single candidate per industry, so there is still the margin of error that the individual candidate may be biased in some way or the other – mayhap the individual has not been within the company for a sufficient period of time to grasp the organizational

culture. Regardless, in examining the concept of authenticity it is needed to be understood that the concept is grounded in a social constructionist perspective that questions the prevalence of objective, disembodied reasoning on the part of human beings in social settings (Liedtka, 2008).

The concept of being true to oneself is to be examined in this paper – complaint divisions of different natures shall be examined in an attempt to discern if it is within human nature to perform more efficiently at work when being (or not) authentic to one's true self. It is thought that various organizations may influence their employees to behave more in accordance to concepts of emotional labour, or 'deep-acting' – the purpose of this paper is to discern and pinpoint which industries are more effective at handling complaints given the attitude of the complaint handler.

STRATEGIC AUTHENTICITY

An organization's present and future position (both handling procedures and strategy) are built based on its past. In order for an individual to remain true to oneself it is deemed necessary that the individual ought to study the company's heritage, its unique origin, and subsequent history. It is easy for a company to be perceived as phony by its personnel repudiating its heritage. (Pine and Gilmore, 2007)

It is important to ask oneself what strategic decisions from the past reverberate now and into the future? When employees seek to understand the corporate past (maybe due to alignment in values) then, and only then, a means to demarcate the present is established. (Pine et al, 2007)

“ You cannot take actions antithetical to your past and think people will view you as authentic, for the easiest way to be perceived as phony is to repudiate your heritage. ”

By examining your surroundings an important context is established for determining the level of authenticity required by a complaints division. With the history and present information at hand we are able to determine the direction and speed at which we are moving so as to ascertain what codes of conduct should not be implemented

when dealing with complainants. It is by this procedure of which the organisation is able to better know its own limits, and thus allows winnowing down to future possibilities that are achievable, definable, and valuable. (Pine et al, 2007)

This paper examines different organizations, unfortunately in order to undergo a proper study of the matters that influence the company the survey established would have to be a lot more rigorous. Different companies move at different speeds, and businesses with a single industry routinely anticipate new issues relating to complaints.

When establishing uniform strategic authenticity within a company it is important to formulate training methods that will instil an urge for all employed to behave authentic – this means not behaving authentic to oneself, but instead behaving authentic on behalf of the corporate self. In order for the process to execute well it is essential that employees are able to discern the difference between being authentic, and being ‘corporate authentic’. It is often the case that if employees’ values do not align with the organization then the individual shall not be employed.

The concept of deep acting refers to a process of which an individual partakes work in such a manner so as they are not being completely genuine about their feelings but in sentiments and gist of emotions they are. It is postulated that by being ‘corporate authentic’ the individuals within an organization are being authentic to the confines that the organization requires them to. The main difference between this and concept of emotional labour is that when a complaint handler is behaving corporately authentic he/she is doing so because they have developed common ground in terms of shared values and ideals of which may only have come through over time.

Pine et al (2007), lists the following strategies to warrant organizations obtaining compelling competitive positions – these are strategies that are both authentic and achievable:

1. Study your heritage
2. Ascertain market and industry positioning
3. Gauge your trajectory
4. Know your limits
5. Stretch your execution capabilities
6. Scan the periphery
7. Formulate your strategic intention
8. Execute well

COMPLAINT VOICING

When dissatisfied customers fail to inform management about a mishap the organization stands to lose. The complainants that choose not to voice their opinion often simply disappear and hence defect to competitors that are in turn more transparent and authentic, thus denying the firm the opportunity to correct the mistakes.

Sheraton hotels devised a system by which customers would receive cash grants for informing staff of any problem areas – is however the usage of discounts, cash, amenities and other incentives any testament to the firm’s credibility and hence authenticity? The answer is no – it is true, however, that some organizations authentic behaviour is more appealing than others, and sometimes this appeal derives itself from what the firm can provide.

Cost-benefit theory suggests that before making a complaint, dissatisfied consumers examine a trade-off (Huppertz, 2007). Customers must anticipate if their actions will make a difference, and more often than not the attitude of the complaint handling personnel may impact the decision for them to voice their opinion. As a result, some important firm-level questions emerge:

1. Can firms reduce the dissatisfied consumer’s costs (time and effort) by adopting procedures to reduce barriers to complaining?
2. Can firms’ complaint handling policies produce expectations of successful outcomes?
3. By implementing complaint handling policies that reduce costs and/or increase expectations of success, can firms increase the frequency of complaint voicing? (Huppertz, 2007)

It may be recommended that firms implement effective complaint handling procedures in order to regain customer satisfaction. Sometimes the usage of effective complaint handling procedures may insinuate that the business in question is not behaving authentically to appeal to its clients, and hence a methodical rigorous process is used instead. Implementation of an effective complaints handling procedure may reduce negative word-of-mouth, increase repurchase intentions, and

may improve company image in absence (or presence) of authenticity within the firm. (Huppertz, 2007)

Even the best complaint handling procedures will not result in a positive result for the firm if consumers fail to voice complaints (Huppertz, 2007). Failure to voice complaints may be derived from a lack of authenticity within an organization – corporate authenticity (referred to as authenticity within this paper) being a key motivator for customer/complaint relations.

COMPLAINTS & AUTHENTICITY

In assessing the quality of complaints service it is essential to be able to contrast existing practices with other industries at large. The health care commission in England and Wales ascertained that problems in complaint handling often arose because of:

- The accessibility of the complaints service;
- The quality of internal investigations;
- The quality of the responses; and
- How well trusts learn from complaints and use this information to bring about improvements in services (Cowan and Anthony, 2008).

Whilst it is essential to improve the process of managing complaints it is also a fact that any adjustments to the procedure alone will not necessarily reduce the number of complaints or let alone address the sole reasons for the nature of the complaint itself. There are probably as many unsatisfied complainants as there are dissatisfied industry personnel. Workplace practices often have to deal with formal complaints infrequently, but this can lead to difficulties. If complaints management staff lack familiarity it may mean that procedures are not always followed correctly due to inconsistencies in approach.

In some industries an effective complaints management team can be supportive to the person complained against. There is plenty of guidance available to practices as to how a complaint management can be conducted, and there are several organization bodies that may offer support and advice to such matters. What is less available is guidance so as to assist complaint managers in meeting complainant's expectations – this is where the role of the incumbent's authenticity comes in.

Cowan et al (2008), cites that from the complainant's perspective, there are two interlinked aspects to a decision to complain:

- the nature of the event or experience giving rise to the complaint (the reason);
- and

- their emotional response to the event and expectations about what the complaint will achieve (the motivation).

Friele and Sluijs (2006), as cited in Cowan et al (2008), found, in their study of 424 complainants in the Netherlands, that altruistic aspirations and a sense of natural justice were important motivators. In response to a questionnaire, 94 per cent of the respondents said that wanting to prevent the incident happening to others was either very important or the most important reason for making the complaint.

When examining the above we can bring the question, does authenticity lead to altruism? Will altruistic aspirations motivate staff to work and perform better whilst enabling the incumbents to fulfil their own personal agendas? The rationale for Friele and Sluijs research is that complainants are not going to be content with any form of complaint handling unless it meets their expectations. In order for a complaint to be fair the following three dimensions were identified:

- 1) The most important aspect was a fair and impartial procedure (87 per cent of respondents).
- 2) On an interpersonal level, 82 per cent of respondents wanted to be treated with respect and with understanding. It was very important to 71 per cent of them that they should be given a chance to tell their own story of what had happened.
- 3) The most wanted outcome was a change in the workplace's practices (79 per cent). A high percentage (84 per cent) also wanted the professional concerned to admit if he/she had made a mistake and 65 per cent wanted an explanation of how the incident occurred. An apology or expression of sympathy, while still considered important, rated lower than wanting an admission that a mistake had been made. (Cowan et al, 2008)

Authenticity is about being true to your inner self, and to that effect we may say to 'human nature' itself. Communication plays a crucial element within most individuals, and sometimes this can only be achieved with a change in the organizations procedures and practices. A commonly overlooked aspect of complaint-inspired improvements lies in the feedback to complainants. Complainants need to know what steps are being taken to rectify/correct a problem otherwise they may grow dissatisfied with the process. The level of authenticity displayed by a complaint handler may cause a domino effect in which the last domino itself is the customer – the customer being the last person to feel the impact of an amiable chain

of events originating from within the company. This paper will try to ascertain if authenticity did indeed have any impact on complainant & organization relations.

WHAT IS AUTHENTICITY IN CONTEXT

Authenticity is examined in context of being the process of developing genuine feelings towards complainants, and determining whether the feelings of honesty allow for business procedures to develop in a rational efficient way. By developing and building on trust it is expected that complainants will be more cooperative and less impatient during proceedings. By being authentic an employee can interact with his/her customer in such a manner that will be proactive in business context and societal terms. An employee, handling complaints, is expected to evolve and develop with expectations of the firm's authenticity code, or at least be influenced by it, this in order to project the company image in a good way towards customers and complainants.

It is only when the employee acts from a deep sense of purpose and meaning that impeccable integrity can be generated of which may boost the company's image – this being postulated to be shown in the complaints' department interface. It is the act of having real conversations, and not adhering to 'procedures' as mandated, that distinguish authentic leadership using firms. It is by facing the dread of the complaint in a positive manner that all obstacles can be overcome, and it is this very same concept in which an attempt to underline any linkages (and trends) shall be made in this paper. (Mathe, 2009)

CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR & AUTHENTICITY

Customer complaints provide valuable service, quality assurance and marketing data. However, there is little validity to say that complainant's complaints will in fact be honest and truthful in its entirety lest the complainant act authentic him/her-self. The complaint handler may in fact build onto a trust relationship with the customer by being authentic themselves and making it obvious in integrity. By not being bound by the cages of emotional labour, and surpassing the limits encompassed by deep-acting,

and hence being true to his/her authentic self, it is postulated that indeed authenticity may pave a path for better customer/business relations. (Goodman and Newman, 2003)

Complaints often do not directly identify the source/cause of a communication problem. It is only by looking within the organization staff that we are able to get a better picture as to what may improve complaint efficacy. It is not only dissatisfied customers that do complain about work protocol, but really it becomes a matter in which the staff itself may have a say in too.

WHY BUSINESSES NEED AUTHENTICITY

In general, authentic businesses stand to gain from marginally lower marketing and HR, sick days and staff turnover, costs than their rivals – this typically 80% and 91% respectively.

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP EFFECT EXAMPLES

Howies – have sales from their catalogue that are 20 times average catalogue returns.

Yeo Valley – have an accident rate on their farms and in their dairies that is 75 percent below industry average, in 18 months Yeo Valley has grown from 800-1,200 people and is the fourth largest yoghurt manufacturer in the UK with no TV advertising.

Innocent – Staff sick days and recruitment costs are 9 percent of the national average, while turnover has increased from 0-£20 Million and market share has gone from 0 to 34 percent in five years. (Croft, 2005)

It is generally concurred that the differentiated sense of self located within the social context, the importance of voice, active participation and emotions brings a new strategic perspective within the workplace (Liedtka, 2008). It is only when an organization aims for an environment that is ‘true’ to itself that complaints are able to be handled in a true efficient manner with minimal conflict. Emotional transparency is important when it comes to letting the customer know the outcomes of any

complaints made. Indeed it is up to the organization to set the norms of what degree of authenticity their employees should have and mayhap it is even their responsibility to warrant that the correct employee, with the right values, is employed for the tasks of handling complaints in a manner that aligns with what is ultimately desired.

The complaints department should be developed such as to align with the powerful strategic authentic intent of the organization in order to build a corporate image renowned for its Ethics (Liedtka, 2008). This, of course, means that employees hired to handle complaints should have a high moral code of conduct, and they should be susceptible to learn ways in which to work for the customer and not against him/her. It is only when stable good character relations are made that an organization may rise above its competitors, and this can be started by building on development of the complaints department.

METHOD

In order to establish a co-relation between authenticity and manner of handling complaints four individuals were approached each pertaining to a different industry. Each interviewed candidate was required to answer comprehensive surveys covering various aspects pertaining to the individual's authenticity traits and the methodical procedures relating to the incumbents work environment. Complaint procedures were segregated into five separate main headings, these were; design, measurability, alignment, response and recovery, and integration. The survey questions were obtained from a management online database that entailed questions by genre, this for thorough analysis.

In selecting individuals for the survey approximately 60 organizations were approached, and personnel that dealt directly with complaints were presented with the interview questions as illustrated in the Appendix. Each individual was further invited to participate in strategic conversation and asked questions of which discerned the criteria that energised him/her at a personal level.

The emotion evident in the answers was treated as positive; employee's passions and flaws are to be taken into accountability in consideration. The questions and answers introduce a vehicle for voice and the best was done to comfort each individual in aspects of safety in confidentiality. The content of the discussion invited creative and novel thinking about aspirations and approaches to achieving it. The nature of the questions enabled each incumbent to become more self-aware of their own self and the organization procedures of which they work for, and in some cases it even encouraged the individual to question more certain structures within their workplace.

Please refer to the Appendix for the survey responses and questions.

FINDINGS

Complaint protocols for four organizations were examined by interviewing incumbents that specifically dealt with such matters within the workplace. Each interviewed employee was then asked to evaluate themselves as honestly as possible in respect to their authenticity and traits. These results can be observed by checking the Appendix or referring to the synopsis results of the questionnaire – this further below.

Table 1: Complaint handling procedures survey synopsis

COMPLAINT ∞	US Army - Analyst	Restaurant Director	Library loans assistant
Design			
Mind-set	Must fit in scope	Positive	Equality
Recovery goal	-	Learning & Service	Clarity and attention
Desired feedback	Positive	Quality + totality	Positive
Guidelines	Refer to statement	Exceeding needs	Calm & proactive
Measure			
Main goal/KPI	Statement abidance	Consistency on KPI	Engage, supportive, sustainable
Excelling factor	Nothing	Product mix	Customer service
Thoughts of staff	Need be diplomatic	Opportunity to learn	Learn from mistakes
Robustness	N/A since new	Medium/high	Strong use of metrics
Data sharing	Only when important	Across the board	Entire department to it
Benchmarking	No	N/A	Nationally
CRM useful?	Not at this stage	Depends on benefits	Could be in cases
Align			
Responses/recovery	-	Yes	Yes
Reward vs handling	No reward system	Yes	No, but retention
Philosophy alignment	Yes	Yes, and above	Absolutely
Feedback alignment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respond and Recover			
Staff proactive-ness	Nil	Yes	No, its routine
Staff empowerment	Complete	Supervisor support	Highly
Conflict strategy	Referral to peers	Positive	Rational
Responsibility	Ideally, yes	Everyone in org.	Everyone in org.
Integrate			
Applying wisdom	Reviews	Feedback+workshops	Through experience
To learn	No one is learning	Workshops	Using awareness
Information medium	Email	Informal meetings	Email
Being proactive	Providing feedback	Consistent language	Through email
Use in marketing	-	Written in procedures	Through handouts

Table 2: Authenticity survey synopsis

AUTHENTICITY	US Army - Analyst	Restaurant Director	Library loans assistant
Greatest Impact	High School friends	Peers	Father & Mother
Tools to be self-aware	Army training	EI workshops	Mirror
Authentic self	Selectivity	-	Restricted to comfort zones
Moments of reflection	When in conflict	When losing temper	When not productive
Deep values	Loyal, justice	Honesty, integrity, credibility	Ayn Rand philosophical facets
Change in values	Yes	-	Set at age of 12-13
Value effect on actions	Self-centredness	-	They shape my life
Extrinsic motivator	Career growth	Work/life balances	Financial independence
Intrinsic motivator	Adept at computers	Personal challenges	Recognition
Balance	Work, family, social	Intrinsic factors first	Connected to function
Support team	Defence department	Those similar to me	School/work/gym
Usage of support	Educational courses	Integrity, honesty, credibility	Mostly self-supported
How to diversify	Cultural conflict	Devil’s advocate	Need to be confident outside my comfort zone
Is life integrated	Yes	Yes	No
Able to be the same	No	Yes	No
What is holding back	Work requirements	N/A	Anxiety
Authentic meaning	Being natural	Being true to oneself	Actions reflect values
Authentically effective	No	-	In some situations
Was a price paid	Yes	-	Yes
Was it worth it	No	-	Extent (awareness)
Steps to develop	Focusing on passions	Self reflection	Psychotherapy need

US ARMY ANALYST

In examining Fred we may observe that his work environment required him to abide by a well defined statement of abidance, as mandated by the army. There were no criteria that the division deemed them to be over achieving in, and there was the need to be diplomatic about all proceedings. Being diplomatic is a very tricky issue to approach whilst maintaining authenticity within oneself. Political channels often necessitate a certain degree of formality of which leaves little room for improvisation or liberty for participants in order to explore their creative or true inner selves. Fred’s work environment did not benchmark itself against competitors, not at the business

level anyway. Protocol procedures were kept to a minimal, with no rewards, no elaborate communication channels besides from email, but there was room for review on certain matters.

The aspects above did have an impact on Fred's development in being authentic. On earlier army experiences Fred did try to be 'natural' when confronting army personnel, this in fact caused him to lose credibility in such situations and since then his only focus has been on aiming for career growth by abiding to what is necessitated from him without being true to his authentic self. Fred's deeply held values pertain to justice and loyalty, and it is also ascertained that despite his passion for computers he is unwilling to give much more thought to improving electronic complaint handling procedures within his workplace. After all, it was a newly developed division, and relatively small, so there was no need in him being true to his inner self – so Fred thought.

The workplace and environment Fred worked would have attained a lot to gain from Fred being authentic. It was a relatively small division, most staff knew each other to a significant extent, and it may have been better off to develop on that foundation of trust by approaching all in an amiable manner. Fred even admits that he has to focus more on passions, and this in turn instigates the fact that Fred was doing the organization more harm than good by not being proactive when it came to developing relations from within the company.

Certain trauma pertaining to Fred's past attempts at being authentic instilled a sense of urgency to him that no work is worth it unless it is deemed absolutely required. Fred in fact states that what is holding him back to performing more authentic is work requirements – that is, he only abides by the minimal requirements and will not take the extra leap forward into developing into the individual that he truly was meant to be.

RESTAURANT DIRECTOR

Paul is a self made individual, being director for a distinguished restaurant with a high profit margin. In regards to complaints Paul states that the general mindset is positive and that there is a general ongoing consensus of learning and providing total quality. The work environment is highly organized by maintaining consistency, across the board data sharing and a high philosophy alignment in accordance to response on recovery as such.

It may be said that differences in complaint handling procedures between Fred and Paul may be institutionalised. Paul works on a profit based organization, and informal optimization meetings are a necessity, and unlike Fred's work environment everyone in the organization holds responsibility for any errs. So what makes Paul tick?

Paul, as an individual, is impacted by his peers and those immediate around him. Paul has a wide array of personal challenges to overcome, and his moments of self-reflection only really occur when he loses temper and he has to self-evaluate the situation. Paul's support team are those that he deems to be most similar to him, and on that aspect we may ponder as to whether the restaurant itself is only hiring like-minded people or not. Paul is relatively true to himself in all situations, but this can be a great detriment in situations in which emotional labour is required. However, it is this very same nature (of being true to his own self) that Paul is able to utilize his rationality to the maximum in all matters pertaining to the handling of complaints.

The business is doing well, which means Paul must be doing something right. Traits such as integrity, honesty, and credibility all produce synergies within a restaurant environment of which whose goal is to attract more customers. Customers value common sense, this is the means to get all problems fixed, and mayhap we may indeed ask if management staff is hiring only like-minded people in this organization.

Paul did abstain from answering certain confidential segments in the survey presented. This does show that he does act out of integrity and is true to his deeply

held values. Here we can see a case of an authentic individual working in an environment with an efficient complaints handling department.

LIBRARY LOANS ASSISTANT

Liam is an intelligent individual who reads books, studies part-time, and works full time. One of his roles in his workplace is to handle and deal with complainants. The general mind-set towards customers in Liam's work environment is that everyone should be treated equal. It is generally mandated that the complaint respondent remain calm and relaxed in all instances, and this aspect may in fact differentiate what sort of personnel are employed within the university library. This is a bit of a contrast as Liam often suffers from anxiety when surrounded by a multitude of people; Liam's workplace seems to value him for his efficiency and capability and not on terms of calmness.

Liam's workplace is benchmarked to national standards, so there is a strong rigidity in work practices and the use of metrics is highly acknowledged. This university library has an entire department devoted to data sharing, and its customer service is of excellent standard. What has to be asked is whether this organization leaves room for a staff member to be completely and utterly authentic? Proactive-ness in responding and recovering complaints seem to be a routine part of the job. That is, Liam has to act in the customer's interest at all times; however, this may also suggest that Liam is partaking in some degree of emotional labour in order to meet work based demands.

Like Fred, Liam's work environment also utilizes emails to a great extent when communicating between divisions and responding to complaints. Considering the volume of customers, out of necessity the library system developed articulate complaint handling handouts for the complainant and staff – these to warrant that all were aware of the procedures.

Liam reflects back to his own self on a regular basis, however, he may not look intrinsically into his own self and his means for self-reflection revolve more around physical appearance alone, and hence the use of a mirror. Liam is able to feel more

comfortable at work than social situations because of his passion for what his organization does; provide books to people. Liam has a fascination with literature and has over time restricted the development of his social flair and nature – he does feel anxiety with ease, but it is the support he gets from his school and work that enable, and motivate, him to look forward to handling complaints in a positive manner.

Liam does learn from his mistakes, and he benefits from self-awareness in such instances, however, in his bid to authenticity Liam does seem keen to undergo psychotherapy. Liam is also very truthful to his ideals, and he makes all that meet him aware of them. To that extent we can say that this individual is behaving very authentically insinuating, that in conjunction with Paul, that complaint handling efficacy in organizations may in fact be related to discriminative employment.

DISCUSSION

Just like death and taxes, the emergence of complaints within an organization is inevitable. As was insinuated on the previous chapters, a high level of authenticity from within ‘may’ exemplify a high quality of customer service and complaint handling procedures – this means a premium may be charged and loyalty may also increase. Complaint handling ought to be viewed as a priority from within the company, and part of the ongoing strategy in order to improve loyalty and ultimately profits from within.

In examining the nature of complaints, and hence determining which divisions are most crucial, we can imagine the complaint allocation to occurring similar to an iceberg distribution – see diagram below: (Goodman, 2006)

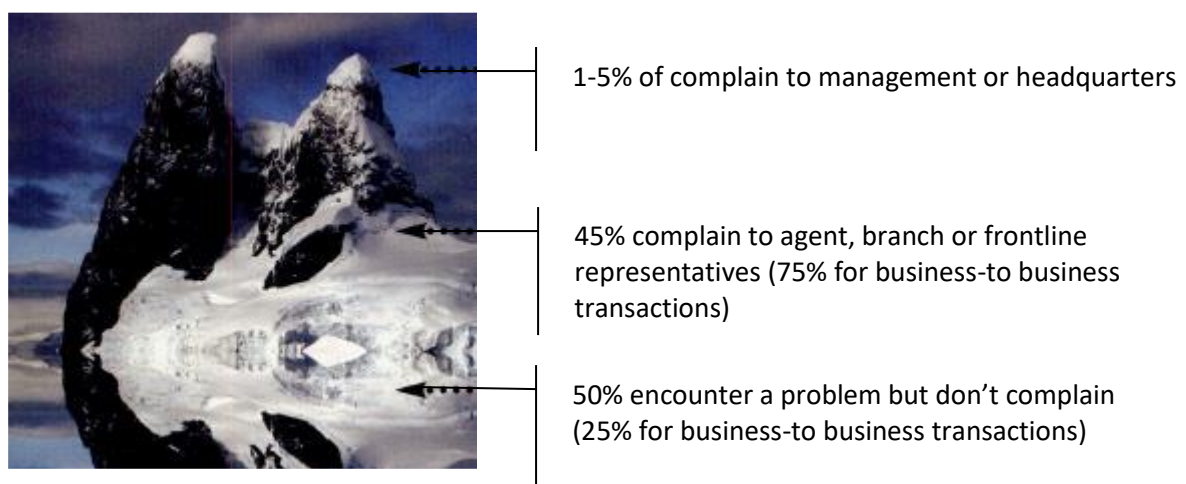


Figure 1: Iceberg Phenomenon

Goodman (2006) cites that negative feedback is usually twice the amount of positive feedback, and when this is taken to online discussions the number of negative feedback is at least four times as much to positive feedback. This trend insinuates that complainants value face-to-face interaction more-so than none, and it suggests that the complaint handler’s comportment (be it authentic or acting) may in fact have a considerable impact on the customer.

In examining complaints, and authenticity impacts, it is important to first identify the main areas of complaint malpractice. The top ten customer complaint malpractice

issues, as cited in the *2000 National Complaints Culture Survey* (Customer complaints Top Ten, 2000), are indicated below with a corresponding analysis in relations to desired traits of authenticity to mitigate such impacts:

Table 3: Authenticity mitigation factors

Top ten complaint malpractice issues	Desired authenticity traits
Increasingly, our attitude to complaints is getting harder "If you don't like it, take your business elsewhere".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patience ▪ Willingness to work with the customer ▪ Persistence
I doubt whether any person in our organization knows the true importance of good customer service and effective complaint handling yet it is integral to our success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desire to learn ▪ Proactiveness ▪ Bureaucratic nature ▪ Fine eye for detail
We do not allow access to senior staff for customers except when things are serious. We are in business (in the interests of public/law) where things can and do upset people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interest in being a ‘shaper of society’ ▪ Altruism ▪ Desire to challenge the norm ▪ Sympathizer
As a local authority the concept of customer turnover does not apply in a commercial sense. However, we need to be much more aware of the customer's role in the shaping of our organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to think in the organization’s perspective and what it can do and offer to the public ▪ Ability to analyse organization issues ▪ Systematic
There is no shortage of support to the notion that a customer who is complaining is giving us a chance and could be a great ambassador. Unfortunately, we take little action to deal with the fact we do not empathize with these customers nor have any urgency in sorting out issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patience ▪ Opportunist ▪ Innovator ▪ Empathy ▪ Sharp ‘eye’ ▪ Noble
I feel that customer service has taken a back seat since the merger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovator, Creator, Implementer ▪ Able to challenge the system
Increased pressure in our department means they are a hindrance, very time-consuming and cause extra stress to the staff dealing with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to cope with pressure ▪ Motivator ▪ Inspirer
More staff see complaints as getting in the way of normal service rather than a chance to impress/improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eye for detail ▪ Perfectionism ▪ Self and organization pride
We make all the right noises but pay lip service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Honesty, Integrity, Righteousness
Too many customers are now "motivated" by obtaining compensation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social butterfly, Persuasiveness, Rationality, Reason

The above table suggests that employers ought to be discriminative when employing their staff so that the individual's values align with the main problem areas associated with the complaints department. It could be said that individuals that are able and adept at 'acting' out their roles may be suitably qualified to handle complaints. However, it is only when individual's play out within their authentic self roles that burdens from overstress, and errs, can be alleviated with a 100% degree of certainty.

More attention devoted to consumer complaint behaviour is needed for the organization adequately to develop policy for addressing customer complaints. The conceptual domain of consumer satisfaction is not limited to product usage but also includes the business experience. Businesses require knowledge, not only of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the products their outlets offer, but also with other facets of transactions and buying interaction. Consumer complaints of any kind are important. (Williams, Drake, and Moran, 1993)

THE THREE CANDIDATES CONTRASTED

In the three scenarios examined only two organizations had a formal protocol in handling complaints – this being the case for Paul and Liam. Fred's work environment was relatively new, and the volume of complaints relatively low, however, in some cases complaints would surface from within the work environment itself. The robustness of the complaints department was relatively solid within Paul's and Liam's workplace – the latter being benchmark on a national level.

Not surprisingly it was only Liam's work environment that was well aware of a customer recovery management process and its benefits. The organization, being nationally benchmarked, had undergone through many years of improvement in its system, and this relates to the matter that Liam is relatively authentic to his own self in contrast to the other two candidates (ref: deep values & etc...). Liam is a relatively young candidate in contrast to the other two, with Paul being the oldest of the three – this of which may indicate that businesses may be discriminative in employing authentic individuals the more established the complaint handling procedures are within.

Paul is methodically more self aware of his own authentic self through his many years of experience. The nature of his role within the restaurant business may have possibly attributed to this matter over the years. Paul's work process to learn about effective complaint handling necessitates the use of workshops – a similar approach that Paul uses to develop his own self-awareness.

Staff empowerment within Fred's workplace is said to be complete – Fred's work also differs from the other two candidates as a face to face interaction with complainants is not overly common. This establishes a culture where being authentic is not overly important as long as you are competent to accomplish your job to an acceptable standard. Unlike the other two candidates, Fred's work environment does not place equal complaint responsibility to all those within the organization.

Fred's work does not involve complaint data sharing across the whole department which insinuates that there must be a reason for this. It is plausible that the values held within each individual in Fred's workplace marginally differ from individual to individual. When we examine the nature of the US defence force itself it becomes quite apparent that the range of intellect within such an organization is rather sparse. The army simply operates by a system in which any individual is able to get in as long as he/she meets the minimum fitness and expertise criteria.

When it comes back to Liam's work environment it ought to be pointed out that despite having the most well planned complaints handling department out of the three, it is only Liam who believes his life is not integrated. This factor points out that differences in authenticity will exist in whatever work environment as it is human nature to be different. It then becomes a very tricky matter to justify the effectiveness of authenticity to the efficacy of the complaints department.

When examining the different surveys it becomes further apparent that it is only Fred's department that does not see the need to learn from mistakes and experience pertaining to as does the other two candidates. It simply becomes a show of brawn, in Fred's environment, as diplomacy holds the key for decisions. The question then arises that the lack of freedom to express oneself may in fact be detrimental to the

construction of synergies from within – this due to the influence of individual's with greater voice. This means that individuals within Fred's environment are not able to express their true authentic selves all the time because of hierarchal constrains.

Further in support to an inequality of authenticity within Fred's work is the matter that the mind-set of all individuals must fit in a general scope, and there is no basis for a proactive mindset as found in the other two candidates.

CONCLUSION

Literature would suggest that businesses are in need of authenticity. By empowering employees to behave as their own authentic self it is made evident that performance is generally improved within the workplace – this in terms of morale, costs, turnover and the like. A proactive workplace leads to a better handling of complaints and procedures, and it is quite plausible that authenticity may provide a driving force for the incumbents within.

The major problem complaint areas were addressed in the length of this paper – it was also suggested that certain values ought to be looked for within individuals when assigning them to handle and deal with complaints. On that note, it should be noted that interview questions addressed all matters in which to ascertain as to whether an individual was authentic or not, but what was not done was a comparison to the individual's personal held values to others within the same department (this would have proved to be much useful).

When contrasting the three candidates, side by side, it was found that indeed there was a trend in authenticity and efficacy in the handling of complaints. However, given our short pool of candidates there is still dubious doubt as to whether the validity of these findings holds. For future studies it would be recommended that not only a larger sample of organizations be obtained but also that more individuals within each organization be attained.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY (FRED)

Job Title: Telecommunications Analyst for a defence contractor.

Workplace: US Army

Task: Ensuring network and system administrations in abidance to suggestions.

Design

- What is our mind-set about complaints?

Complaints are handled according to the statement of work. If a user complained about something that was outside the scope of the statement, I would explain to them that we were only contracted to provide certain services. I would also suggest options that they might take as I believe it's in everyone's best interest that people are able to do their jobs. However, one has to be very careful not to provide services that aren't being paid for.

If a complaint falls within the scope of work, then we would either fix the issue immediately, or explain to the customer why it can't be fixed at that particular time and explain when we expect to have it fixed. Complaints that are directly related to the statement of work can have material effect on the contract (the government doesn't have to pay for services you aren't providing) and so receive top priority.

- What do we want to accomplish with our service recovery approach?

I do not understand this question.

- What experiences do we want our customers to have when they give us feedback?

Customers should feel that their complaint was received and understood and they should feel confident that we will communicate with them regarding the issue.

- What guidelines should we follow when handling complaints?

Look to the statement of work. If its not on the statement of work, we can suggest alternatives ways to accomplish a task from our own personal experiences. If it is on the statement of work, its our job to provide those services. Disagreements about whether the statement of work is being fulfilled or not (I say we're fulfilling it, the customer disagrees) should be referred to the project manager or higher.

Measure

- What are our goals and how will we know we are getting close to them?

To provide all services listed within the statement of work to the customers' satisfaction.

- What do we currently do well?

No comment (everything could be better).

- What does our staff think and feel about complaints?

My subordinate and I were more than happy to listen to communicate with our customers. "Complaints" had to be handled very diplomatically as our work relied on the cooperation of several different offices within the military. Because of this, handling actual complaints (someone emailing the government side program manager for example) was quite exhausting and a real chore.

- How robust are our current metrics regarding product or service failures?

We did not collect any metrics about service uptime etc. due to the fact that it was a new installation.

- How widely is our complaint data shared internally?

Standard complaints, complaining etc. was shared between my subordinate and I so that we might better provide service to the customer and at least be on the same page when a complaint could not be resolved immediately. Serious complaints were shared with the project manager.

- Have we benchmarked ourselves against our competitors?

No we did not.

- Would it be useful for us to use a robust customer relationship management (CRM) program to track our complaints?

Eventually, a customer support tracking system would need to be implemented. However, during my time with this project we did not reach this stage of development.

Align

- Do our written responses to complaints reflect our service recovery approach?

I do not understand the question.

- Does our reward system compensate for effective complaint handling?

There is no reward system. However, the ability to maintain the contract is contingent on the ability to fulfil the SOW to the customers satisfaction.

- Are our return policies, refunds, and guarantees in alignment with our customer philosophy?

Yes, "returns, refunds, guarantees" are all negotiated by the government project management team and our project managers and recorded in the contract.

- Are our internal policies, procedures, and systems in alignment with our feedback philosophy?

Yes.

Respond and Recover

- Does our staff respond to complaining customers as if they have been given a gift?

No.

- How empowered is our staff to respond to complaints?

My staff member was fully empowered to respond to any complaints that could be solved technically. I handled complaints which required inter- office communication when the need arose.

- How do we handle conflicts between our staff and our customers?

Conflicts between staff and customers are either resolved or escalated. If my subordinate has a problem with a customer and I can't bring the issue to resolution, I have to escalate the issue to my PM.

- Does everyone, in some way, take responsibility for responding and recovering for our customers?

Ideally, this would be the case. However, I can't speak for all the employees.

Integrate

- How do we apply what we learn from our customers to help improve our quality?

After action reviews are conducted at the end of every major training exercise. This gives people who are not normally engaged with the system a chance to provide their feedback and it gives me a chance to respond to and take note of said feedback.

Suggestions for improvements to services (that are still within the scope of the SOW of course) are recorded and implemented later according to their priority.

- What is our process enabling staff to learn from each other about effective complaint handling?

I do not think anyone is learning about effective complaint handling.

- What is our system for sharing information across departments?

Email.

- How do we ensure that the topic of "feedback" is on everyone's agenda?

The government never hesitates to provide feedback and "feedback" that fell within the scope of the SOW was our job, so, was definitely on our agenda.

- How can we use our service recovery approach in our marketing?

I do not understand the question.

Authentic Leadership Questions

- Which people and experiences in your early life had the greatest impact on you?

Friends from High School.

- What tools do you use to become self-aware? What is your authentic self?
What are the moments when you say to yourself, this is the real me?
 - i. Army communication course.
 - ii. I am kind to those I believe will help me in life and I try to distance myself from those that don't.
 - iii. Whenever I experience conflict.

- What are your most deeply held values? Where did they come from? Have your values changed significantly since your childhood? How do your values inform your actions?
 - i. Being loyal to close friends, family, and justice.
 - ii. Yes, the Army has thought me many things, and one of these things is to be rational in all situations.
 - iii. It seems I am only concerned in relating to those that may impact my life in some way or the other.

- What motivates you extrinsically? What are your intrinsic motivations? How do you balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in your life?
 - i. The potential for career growth and the establishment of a family life.
 - ii. Growth to become better adept at programming.
 - iii. By trying to fit work around family and social life.

- What kind of support team do you have? How can your support team make you a more authentic leader? How should you diversify your team to broaden your perspective?
 - i. I have the support and training from the development department established within the defence department.
 - ii. Courses based on ethics, conduct, and communication.

- iii. In the army it is required that individual's develop a similar mind set to one another and hence discipline is required as a norm. The IT department may employ locals and the cultural conflict may broaden my perspective.
- Is your life integrated? Are you able to be the same person in all aspects of your life—personal, work, family, and community? If not, what is holding you back?
- i. Yes, I study, work, and live a family life.
 - ii. No, the mandates from work require that I behave differently than I would outside work.
 - iii. As explained.
- What does being authentic mean in your life? Are you more effective as a leader when you behave authentically? Have you ever paid a price for your authenticity as a leader? Was it worth it?
- i. Not acting out in order to be in roles but rather adapt with what is natural.
 - ii. No
 - iii. Yes, one time when in charge of training newly deployed personnel I was not able to command respect out of my subordinates because I treated them like friends. The correct move would have to have been more commanding.
 - iv. No.
- What steps can you take today, tomorrow, and over the next year to develop your authentic leadership?

I can build and develop my sense of purpose and focus more on my computing passions, an environment I grew up in.

SURVEY (PAUL)

Job Title: Director of JazzKing Pty Ltd.

Workplace: Seanet Family Restaurant

Task: Handling 36 beverage staff, 28 chefs and apprentices..

- In the past 90 days, what were your three most important strategic accomplishments?

Achievement of staff number reduction and implementation of marketing strategies

- In the past 90 days, what were the three most important ways you fell short of your potential?

Turnover shortfall and number of kegs sold

- In the past 90 days, what are the three most important things you have learned about your strategy?

Requirement for flexibility, seasonal adjustment

What's our purpose as a company? What's the promise of our brand?

- What do our customers/consumers feel is the most valuable things that we can do for them? (Consider this as the basis of your brand promise.)

Able to socialize in a safe and friendly environment

- What is the unique value of our organization...the competitive differentiator in our minds and in the minds of our stakeholders?

Service quality standards, development of employee competences in Food and Beverage

- Where is our competition coming from and what are their perceived advantages?

In a homogeneous industry environment – the home is the biggest competitor

- What's our strategy for how to work with what we have to create our desired results?

Provide benefits of value for money, totality of a service/entertainment experience

- What are our key 3 to 5 strategic imperatives...the things that we feel we must accomplish to create the future outcomes we want to create? (These imperatives are the building blocks of your plan.)

Employee competence; implementation of Food Safe standards (HACCP) marketing and branding

Design

- What is our mind-set about complaints?

Must be dealt with for a positive outcome by the person receiving the complaint

- What do we want to accomplish with our service recovery approach?

Organisational learning and improved service delivery

- What experiences do we want our customers to have when they give us feedback?

Quality, value for money, totality of entertainment experience

- What guidelines should we follow when handling complaints?

Exceeding needs, delighting the customer

Measure

- What are our goals and how will we know we are getting close to them?

Delivering consistently on KPIs

- What do we currently do well?

Product mix

- What does our staff think and feel about complaints?

Opportunity to learn

- How robust are our current metrics regarding product or service failures?

Medium/high

- How widely is our complaint data shared internally?

Across the board in staff meeting

- Have we benchmarked ourselves against our competitors?

Information not generally available

- Would it be useful for us to use a robust customer relationship management (CRM) program to track our complaints?

Depends on cost versus benefits

Align

- Do our written responses to complaints reflect our service recovery approach?

Yes

- Does our reward system compensate for effective complaint handling?

Yes

- Are our return policies, refunds, and guarantees in alignment with our customer philosophy?

Above industry standard

- Are our internal policies, procedures, and systems in alignment with our feedback philosophy?

Yes

Respond and Recover

- Does our staff respond to complaining customers as if they have been given a gift?

Yes

- How empowered is our staff to respond to complaints?

Deal with them, you have supervisor support

- How do we handle conflicts between our staff and our customers?

Positive

- Does everyone, in some way, take responsibility for responding and recovering for our customers?

Everyone in the organisation is in charge of representing the organisation

Integrate

- How do we apply what we learn from our customers to help improve our quality?

Feedback and workshops

- What is our process enabling staff to learn from each other about effective complaint handling?

Workshops

- What is our system for sharing information across departments?

Department meeting informal meeting and workshops

- How do we ensure that the topic of "feedback" is on everyone's agenda?

Consistent management language

- How can we use our service recovery approach in our marketing?

Written into procedures

Authentic Leadership Questions

- Which people and experiences in your early life had the greatest impact on you?

Peers

- What tools do you use to become self-aware? What is your authentic self?
What are the moments when you say to yourself, this is the real me?

EI workshops

- What are your most deeply held values? Where did they come from? Have your values changed significantly since your childhood? How do your values inform your actions?

Honesty, integrity, credibility

- What motivates you extrinsically? What are your intrinsic motivations? How do you balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in your life?
 - i. Work/life balances.
 - ii. Personal challenges.
 - iii. Intrinsic motivators take priority, not money

- What kind of support team do you have? How can your support team make you a more authentic leader? How should you diversify your team to broaden your perspective?
 - i. The one I build around me able to reflect similar values and beliefs to myself.
 - ii. Integrity, honesty and credibility.
 - iii. Do not hire clones, appreciate the role of devil's advocate

- Is your life integrated? Are you able to be the same person in all aspects of your life—personal, work, family, and community? If not, what is holding you back?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. Yes

- What does being authentic mean in your life? Are you more effective as a leader when you behave authentically? Have you ever paid a price for your authenticity as a leader? Was it worth it?

Being true to my personal values and beliefs.

- What steps can you take today, tomorrow, and over the next year to develop your authentic leadership?

Continue with self-realization and reflection.

SURVEY (LIAM)

Job Title: Library Loans Assistant.

Workplace: Edith Cowan University Library (Joondalup)

Task: Handling customer queries and complaints.

- In the past 90 days, what were your three most important strategic accomplishments?

1. Implementing a new health regime focused on increasing cardiovascular health with an even bigger focus on vasodilatation.
2. Changing eating habits, going from a diet consisting of moderate carbohydrates to a diet that focused on protein intake & carb cycling on an 18 meal rotation.
3. Changing from a purely technical focus of study (finance/economics) to study that emphasized philosophy & interpersonal skills

- In the past 90 days, what were the three most important ways you fell short of your potential?

1. Failing to start the new diet at the time I should have, I ended up wasting at least 5 weeks trying to transition to the new diet.
2. Spending too much time on a single philosophy when I should have been taking into account other philosophers opinions
3. Not regulating my sleeping pattern during July & August, the lack of sleep or over amounts of sleep lead to a sharp downward trend in productivity in all aspects of my life.

- In the past 90 days, what are the three most important things you have learned about your strategy?

1. Assessing how likely the goals that I have set are to be achieved in a given time frame, for example; setting a goal of becoming an excellent leader of men by reading a few books was unrealistic. Genuine change takes time and the goals that I set need to be both incremental and leading to a much bigger focus rather than looking only at the end result.
2. I am human and I will make mistakes, the important thing is how I respond after making mistakes.

3. I must take time to play, scheduling only productive work is counterproductive, time off for recreation is just as important.

What's our purpose as a company? What's the promise of our brand?

- What do our customers/consumers feel is the most valuable things that we can do for them? (Consider this as the basis of your brand promise.)

I feel that being able to assure to the customer that I have made sure every alternative to getting the product they require in a timely manner has been achieved.

- What is the unique value of our organization...the competitive differentiator in our minds and in the minds of our stakeholders?

That all customers (students & staff) are created equal, no matter what your rank or experience your needs are not put ahead of others and that others needs are not put ahead of yours.

- Where is our competition coming from and what are their perceived advantages?

Our competition are the other universities all over the world who export education to international students, if they are providing better service to students than we are then we are at a strategic (given a long enough time horizon anyway) of going out of business due to the high costs of maintaining a library.

- What's our strategy for how to work with what we have to create our desired results?

We have a number of strategies based around our loan procedure to ensure all customers have equal access to the products they desire. Not only equal access but also access to the highest quality materials in the most efficient form, this could be in physical form or it could be an electronic version.

- What are our key 3 to 5 strategic imperatives...the things that we feel we must accomplish to create the future outcomes we want to create? (These imperatives are the building blocks of your plan.)

1. Maintain a library services that enable us to be competitive with both the best that Australia has to offer & also the best that the world has to offer – that’s the level of competitiveness we will be facing over coming decade.

2. Adapt to changing staff needs, current issues of length of service being favored over competency need to be addressed in a tactful manner.

Adherence to budgets could be far stricter, not saying that cost blowouts are common practice rather that if an efficiency consultant were to be hired things could be done very differently.

Design

- What is our mind-set about complaints?

That if following the correct library procedure then the issue is with the customers own aggravation & frustration – most likely stress from academic deadlines. Our job is to try and help the customer as much as possible without giving them any higher level of priority compared to other students.

- What do we want to accomplish with our service recovery approach?

That when a failure does occur that the loans staff explain the situation as clearly as possible and provide a service that while routine to the loans staff will surprise the customer with the level of attention & service that they receive.

- What experiences do we want our customers to have when they give us feedback?

That the loans staff they dealt with was as helpful as possible and did their best to explain the rules & regulations of the library.

- What guidelines should we follow when handling complaints?

Stay calm & try to resolve the situation on the spot, if the complaint warrants it, call a supervisor for assistance, if customer becomes overly aggressive push button for library security assistance.

Measure

- What are our goals and how will we know we are getting close to them?

Engage and serve our communities

- a. Improve the services offered to off-campus students ensuring they follow the Universities Australia guidelines.
- b. Improve student satisfaction with access to the collection, ensuring the catalogue accurately reflects Library resources.
- c. Utilize collaborative strategies with learning precinct partners, community organizations and professional groups. This will especially focus on the development of resources for online systems and services.

Provide a supportive and stimulating learning community

- a. Improve services to meet the changing expectations of students and staff regarding the use of mobile technology.
- b. Ensure that the space at Mount Lawley Library incorporates a learning commons area with adequate computer access, group study space and shelving layouts that meet access standards for people with disabilities.
- c. Improve the foyer space at ECU SW (Bunbury) and develop group study and learning commons areas

Develop research focus and depth

- a. Improve support offered to ECU's research, in particular the University's research collection, services provided to research students and staff, the development of a digital repository, and submissions required by Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA).

Build organizational sustainability

- a. Increase multi-skilling and converged roles to improve productivity and services at Joondalup Campus Library
- b. Close Churchlands Library efficiently transferring the remaining collection to the other Libraries and improving productivity from the closure of a service point

➤ What do we currently do well?

Customer service quality is very high, services provided to customers & the facilities provided come very hard to compete with.

➤ What does our staff think and feel about complaints?

Can't speak for all but I do feel most complaints are user error based complaints and that it is our role to educate the customer so they don't make the mistake again.

➤ How robust are our current metrics regarding product or service failures?

Very strong use of metrics based around availability of products, little use when dealing with complaints given the habitual nature of complaints – most is about customer failing to take notice of how the library works.

- How widely is our complaint data shared internally?

Almost an entire department is based around it one way or another

- Have we benchmarked ourselves against our competitors?

Nationally: yes, absolutely necessary when dealing with the agreements in place for interlibrary services. I'm not aware of international bench marking.

- Would it be useful for us to use a robust customer relationship management (CRM) program to track our complaints?

It could be when attempting to improve student education of the library or perhaps improving the training for staff to deal with complaints.

Align

- Do our written responses to complaints reflect our service recovery approach?

Yes, the information provided by the library is the same that they would receive in person.

- Does our reward system compensate for effective complaint handling?

I'm not aware of any reward system other than the retention of competent staff.

- Are our return policies, refunds, and guarantees in alignment with our customer philosophy?

Absolutely, given there is very little revenue generated by the library there are generally few complaints about all three issues.

- Are our internal policies, procedures, and systems in alignment with our feedback philosophy?

Yes, feedback is always taken seriously and if the feedback is useful then library services are changed to reflect the suggestions.

Respond and Recover

- Does our staff respond to complaining customers as if they have been given a gift?

Again, I can't speak for all of the loans staff but I certainly don't. The repetitiveness of the complaints (the majority anyway) makes it more of a routine part of the job rather than a learning experience.

- How empowered is our staff to respond to complaints?

The staff are highly trained to deal with the regular complaints, if there is a genuine complaint, one that is unique to the loans staff then a supervisor will be notified and give additional guidance.

- How do we handle conflicts between our staff and our customers?

Due to the lack of monetary transactions that occur we have few conflicts between staff & customers. Generally any conflicts come down to customers that have failed to follow university procedure and the customer will then be educated on the university procedures. If conflicts escalate & a supervisor can't handle the situation then security may be called.

- Does everyone, in some way, take responsibility for responding and recovering for our customers?

Loans staff are very much encouraged to handle the complaints on the spot if they have time & the ability to handle the issue.

Integrate

- How do we apply what we learn from our customers to help improve our quality?

It's not until we have a routine enough complaint can we see if we need to change the way we educate the customers so they can better help themselves.

- What is our process enabling staff to learn from each other about effective complaint handling?

I have found that the loans staff are all very close and will have no trouble with sharing information about routine complaints. There is a high rotation among the staff as far as filling in shifts (around every 3 hours, 2-3 staff per shift, 5 shifts per

day) on the front line desk of the library so any information that is useful is passed on to the next staff member. Supervisors will also make the loans staff aware of issues & complaints.

- What is our system for sharing information across departments?

Generally staff wide email notices of issues that require addressing. Generally 5-10 emails per day are sent to all library staff that addresses daily issues in the library.

- How do we ensure that the topic of "feedback" is on everyone's agenda?

As above, a lot of information is shared among the staff, very little is missed and changes are made quickly.

- How can we use our service recovery approach in our marketing?

Not totally sure about how much marketing the library actually does, I'm sure that routine mistakes by customers contribute to new information issued by the library – often bookmarks or information handouts in the library.

Authentic Leadership Questions

- Which people and experiences in your early life had the greatest impact on you?

Assertive side: Father, Softer skills: Mother – most other leadership skills have come from starting part time work relatively early (12 going on 13) and progressing quicker than most.

- What tools do you use to become self-aware? What is your authentic self?

What are the moments when you say to yourself, this is the real me?

Self Aware: Looking in the mirror at the gym, nothing is more real or more confronting. You can't lie about your progress, how productive you are in the gym is reflected over time in how far you can run on the treadmill or how much weight you can lift. Authentic self: I am highly defensive outside of my comfort zones, since somebody very close to me died in 2003 my only social interactions have been at work, at the gym & in the class room – outside of these areas the thought of social interaction brings about an extremely high anxiety response: particularly if the social interaction is a planned one a few days or weeks in advance. Inside the comfort zones

I doubt the people interacting with me would have any idea about how I feel outside of that setting. The real me: I feel like the only time I can be genuine with myself is during productive work which is why I only feel comfortable in certain situations. Outside of productive activities my mind can only think of productive things I would rather be doing or looking at a way to get out of the social interaction.

- What are your most deeply held values? Where did they come from? Have your values changed significantly since your childhood? How do your values inform your actions?

This question is best answered by quoting Ayn Rand, I feel that in all of my philosophy readings Rand's values best reflect my own. My values have changed very little since childhood, they have simply become far better defined.

At a sales conference at Random House, preceding the publication of *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the book salesmen asked me whether I could present the essence of my philosophy while standing on one foot. I did as follows:

1. Metaphysics: Objective Reality
2. Epistemology: Reason
3. Ethics: Self-interest
4. Politics: Capitalism

if you want this translated into simple language, it would read: 1. Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed or Wishing won't make it so. 2. You can't eat your cake and have it, too. 3. Man is an end in himself. 4. Give me liberty or give me death.

If you held these concepts with total consistency, as the base of your convictions, you would have a full philosophical system to guide the course of your life. But to hold them with total consistency to understand, to define, to prove and to apply them requires volumes of thought. Which is why philosophy cannot be discussed while standing on one foot nor while standing on two feet on both sides of every fence. This last is the predominant philosophical position today, particularly in the field of politics.

My philosophy, Objectivism, holds that:

1. Reality exists as an objective absolute, facts are facts, independent of man's feelings, wishes, hopes or fears.
2. Reason (the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by man's senses) is man's only means of perceiving reality, his only source of knowledge, his only guide to action, and his basic means of survival.
3. Man? Every man is an end in himself, not the means to the ends of others. He must exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself. The pursuit of his own rational self-interest and of his own happiness is the highest moral purpose of his life.
4. The ideal political-economic system is laissez-faire capitalism. It is a system where men deal with one another, not as victims and executioners, nor as masters and slaves, but as traders, by free, voluntary exchange to mutual benefit. It is a system where no man may obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force, and no man may initiate the use of physical force against others. The government acts only as a policeman that protects man's rights; it uses physical force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use, such as criminals or foreign invaders. In a system of full capitalism, there should be (but, historically, has not yet been) a complete separation of state and economics, in the same way and for the same reasons as the separation of state and church.

- What motivates you extrinsically? What are your intrinsic motivations? How do you balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in your life?

Extrinsic: Financial independence, not to be confused with material wealth. The security of knowing that what I have (passive income, comfortable shelter etc) is mine & mine to keep regardless of my actions productive or unproductive.

Intrinsic: recognition of my productivity

Balance: The priority is very much connected, if my intrinsic goals are reached then capitalism will likely make it worth my while. If my extrinsic goals are reached then I will have ample time to work on my intrinsic goals.

- What kind of support team do you have? How can your support team make you a more authentic leader? How should you diversify your team to broaden your perspective?

I am self motivated & very much self supported, if I were to have a support team I would need to be less defensive in social interactions outside of my comfort zones (school/work/gym)

- Is your life integrated? Are you able to be the same person in all aspects of your life—personal, work, family, and community? If not, what is holding you back?

I can be the exact same person in all but social interactions (outside of school/work/gym) in that situation I am likely to be in heightened state of anxiety and very much opposed to my regular self. I think it's quite clear that my defensive nature is what is causing that.

- What does being authentic mean in your life? Are you more effective as a leader when you behave authentically? Have you ever paid a price for your authenticity as a leader? Was it worth it?

Being authentic to me would be to have my actions reflect my values, some people don't agree with my values – particularly those who place a high value on altruism or religion. Depending on the situation I can be a highly effective leader based on my values.

- What steps can you take today, tomorrow, and over the next year to develop your authentic leadership?

I would need more experience in a wider range of situations that I don't feel I have participated in over the past few years, to do that would likely require psychotherapy to reduce the effects of panic attacks from social anxiety, and I highly doubt I could improve my situation without that type of help.