Discussion Question 1

How is it possible for individuals and organizations to fail to focus on customers?
An organization can either be made or broken depending on how it handles its customers. An organization that relates and aligns itself properly with the customers and which provides services to, both internal and external has prospects of huge rewards over the long term period. A substandard customer service delivery can quickly lead an organization into bankruptcy and closure.

Customer focus is an element that is often cultivated via a wide range of processes. The leadership of an organization has the sole responsibility of ensuring that every decision and action taken is based on customer focus. This is particularly important through open communication channels, mentorship and training and a successful teamwork (Plunkett, Attner, Allen, 2008). Thus, it is impossible for customer focus to be relegated to the lower organizational levels. Customer focus is often not achieved when leadership is not accurately involved in the process. Thus, it should embrace customer focus a lot. These are the essentials that should top in any top management's list.

What are the similarities and the differences between serving internal and external customers?
The internal customers are those that are within the organization. They also include the various individuals who work in other organizations in provision of goods and services to the organization. On the other hand, the external customers are often the target market for the organization.

Having a strong customer base is paramount to the existence of any organization. Thus, there is need to focus on the external customer and the revenue that they generate. Thus, having focused on establishing a strong customer base of both loyal and returning customers often aid to keeping a business both strong and growing. In addition, the individuals who aid in the running of a business are as crucial as the revenue generators (Plunkett, Attner, Allen, 2008).

Describe customer focus strategies internal or external from your own experience.
A customer focus strategy is a strategy that aims at acquiring, retaining and growing the customer base. This applies to both internal customers and the external strategies. It is often built on the interactions that the organization has with its customers and the amount of value maximized with every interaction.

Discussion Question 2

How tactical plans are typically established
A well-developed tactical plan has specific stated actions that are often assigned to certain employees with specified deadlines. There is need to understand the various strategic goals involved. This will enable the organization identify the various courses of actions that it will undertake in order to make an achievement in those strategic objectives. A tactical plan is often drawn up so that what needs to be done and how it should be done is identified.

What challenges confront middle managers charged with strategy implementation?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A strategic implementation often goes hand in hand with information systems, human resources, leadership and culture. The challenge often faced, is when the employees at the lower levels are unable and unwilling to implement these strategies. Also, ineffective leadership, a weak strategy, in addition to insufficient leadership attention also poses as a challenge to middle managers charged with strategy implementation.

Beer and Eisenstat identify what they call silent killers of strategy implementation and learning. Provide concrete examples preferably from your own experience of how these silent killers sabotage strategy implementation.

Lack of team work from the management team; Team work is necessary in the success of any organizational strategy, and the overall success of the organization. Poor communication, this is more so between the top officials and the middle managers, the managers and the lower level personnel. In order for an organizational strategy to succeed, it is crucial that there is dialogue throughout the organization (Dodd, Favaro, 2007). Unclear strategies and conflicting priorities also sabotage the implementation of a strategy. In order to avoid this, it is essential that there is agreement between the leadership team on priorities.

What are the fundamental tensions that Dodd and Favaro identify?

The three fundamental tensions identified include; short term verses long term goals, profitability verses growth and the whole of the organization verses part of it. It is important that a common key is identified that reconciles the three objectives (Dodd, Favaro, 2007).

Why do Beer and Eisenstat add learning to the list of victims of these silent killer?

Effective and efficient teamwork often integrates and coordinates the activities that revolve around the customers, products, localities and businesses. E.g. lack of learning the characteristics of the external customers, who poses the target market for the products, would result in poor service and product delivery, which would be disastrous to the organization.

Discussion question 3

Strategy formulation presupposes a set of goals and objectives. Why are goals and objectives obvious?

Goals and objectives are obvious since they facilitate planning, they aid in evaluation and control performance, they provide a source of inspiration and motivation and facilitate in the process of planning.

What characteristics of people and organizations can make setting goals and objectives difficult?

Lack of evidence of unity among the various individuals towards common goals and objectives is one of the characteristic. This is where they lack unity in goal setting and formulation. There is lack of communication between different departments and between leaders and subordinates (Plunkett, Attner, Allen, 2008).

What techniques assist managers in ranking objectives?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prioritization plays a key role in determining which objectives have the highest priority. There are can be divided into two, defining the scope and scheduling implementation. They are the ABC prioritization, which ranks in order of importance and urgency. The POSEC method, this is a method that breaks the main goals into smaller sub-goals. This enables them to address one sub-goal after the other until they have been able to accomplish the main goal.

What obstacles stand in the way of achieving agreement as to the ranking of objectives and prioritizing tasks?
This is often brought about by differences over the sequence of activities and tasks. This is often between managers to managers, managers and top officials, or managers and stakeholders. This often includes goals incompatibility and differences between long-term and short-term perspectives.