

ABSTRACT

There is widely acknowledged interest and recognition of the importance of internal marketing as a management approach that provides a systematic framework for managing employees towards a market orientation by aligning external marketing objectives with the internal capabilities of the organization. It is reasonable to expect that the concept has a clear meaning and a related body of empirical findings.

However, marketing scholars have not agreed upon a single, common definition of internal marketing. The extant literature on internal marketing contains a variety of interpretations in relation to the domain of internal marketing, its aims and its focus. Therefore, much of the knowledge available is mainly derived from normative work as the proportion of empirical studies remains limited. Internal marketing practice remains limited, probably because of the lack of a proper underlying philosophy as well as the mixed evidence relating to implementation.

This study proposes a conceptual framework which seeks to define the domain of the internal marketing concept, together with its' antecedents and consequences. The subject of internal marketing is investigated within the context of tourism as a unique service industry in which there is a high level; of contact between customers and employees and where internal programmes aimed at employees have value to complement external programmes targeted at customers. A qualitative case study of one of the leading travel firms in UK from an employment perspective is used to shed light on the unique culture that underlies internal marketing practices, how internal marketing is practiced in reality, the way in which it affects both internal and external aspects of the organisation

The findings highlight the importance of organisational culture and the manner in which culture underpins effective internal marketing within a business context. Internal marketing practices are shown to be vital in building and sustaining a people- and service-orientated culture throughout the organisation. The organisational managerial approach appears to have considerable consequences for an internal marketing programme as well as for the employees' performance which, in turn, will affect customer satisfaction.