Findings: The Perspectives of Front-Line Staff

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter and the next two Chapters will report the research findings. The findings are divided according to three main groups interviewed namely; front-line staff, operational managers, and senior managers. The aim is to ease the comparison between the findings of the three layers of staff. In addition, some interviews questions were modified according to the respondent position in order to highlight the different perspectives. The finding will be presented in form of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged within data.

The aim of this chapter is to present employee perspectives on three main themes, namely; the underlying philosophies of the company (culture), the company's human resource practices (branding, recruitment, training, reward system, internal communications, and empowerment) and how they affect their role and performance and, finally, how these practices affect the work environment and level of satisfaction of front-line respondents. This will help to explore certain key themes in the internal marketing process. For example, what concepts underpin the process, the most effective practices within it and how they influence internal and external aspects of the organisation? It will also contribute to addressing the research questions and achieving the research objectives.

Fifteen front line staff members were interviewed within thirteen branches (see Table 6.1). Although all respondents work in UK, some come from different countries such as Australia and New Zealand. On the other hand, some of the British respondents spent some years in other Fun Travel branches outside UK. The respondents' working experience ranges from six years with the company to new enrolled employees with only one month's experience of the company. The aim was to reflect different perceptions on how the company retains its employees and how they accommodate new entrants as well. Responses were also explored on how employees perceive the company's values and beliefs and how these are transferred to new employees.

Table 6.1 The main attributes of front-line staff respondents

Respondents	Gender	Years of Employment
Front-line1	Female	5 months (1 year in travel industry)
Front-line2	Male	Seven months (2 years in travel industry)
Front-line3	Female	Five and half years
Front-line4	Female	Three years
Front-line5	Female	One and half years
Front-line6	Male	Two years
Front-line7	Female	One year
Front-line8	Male	One year
Front-line9	Male	Six years
Front-line10	Female	Five months
Front-line11	Male	One and half month(10 years in international hotel chain)
Front-line12	Male	Three years
Front-line13	Female	One month
Front-line14	Female	Two years
Front-line15	Male	One and half years

6.2 Organisational Culture

6.2.1 The company's "Employee orientation" culture

Asking front line employees indirectly how they think the company views them or cares about them can help to reveal four main points; firstly, the most important aspect is that the company does help them all the way through which gives them confidence. Respondents claimed that consultation and support are always there if needed.

> *I feel like I have people who look out for me and help me out if any issue should arise (front line 7).*

You are given all the support you need (front line9).

The managerial process helps you, guides you all the way (front line 12).

This kind of support appears to be important to employees as it encourages them to work in a relaxed environment to balance the stresses of the sales driven environment they are working in. All respondent are confident that there will be support if any problems emerged. They also are clear that they are well informed and qualified to achieve their role professionally. All of this gives them self-assurance in themselves and in their company.

Secondly, according to respondents, the company encourages employees to develop themselves within the company without any obvious constraints. They give the opportunities and the support to all employees to prove themselves and to grow. Any front line staff member can be promoted to an operational manager within a very short period but only if he/she proves himself/herself and wants the position. This policy encourages ambitious employees to continue with the company. It also gives an excellent image of the company as an attractive workplace (as will be further shown in the employee branding section of this chapter).

The company really encourage people to develop themselves within the business, you get opportunities to move up quite quickly so you can manage stores and all that sort of individual businesses quite well (front line1).

Everyone moves up through the company so people who are in charge of you have actually done your job before so they understand pitfalls and benefits of it (front line4).

Finally, respondents state that they can raise any issue they want to without restriction. Front-line employees' opinions are respected and taken into consideration. An example for is that the company encourages staff to meet the decision makers within the organisation.

ya I feel comfortable going and talking to any to any sort of manager about any ideas or ambitious that I might have and it seems like they listen to you so ya but it's very relaxed as well you know you have...there is a two way path between managers and staff (front line1).

> *I am going to hopefully write an e-mail to my senior manager just about some ideas that I have and so I hope that he will respond positively to that but we will see (front line1).*

Although communication is open throughout the company, there is an annual gathering for face to face meetings so everyone can feel part of the big team.

> *They're trying to keep us all together as a team, have everybody focus on the business as a whole and all of us working together and making us all feel part of that team (front line8)*

Information about everything is available and everyone is involved from the first day in branch meetings and social events. Transparency is important in gaining employees' trust.

> *I feel I am well informed about what the company is doing and what things are available to me so that's all very good (front line 7).*

> *I have been involved in everything that has been going on in the store from my first day so I have been involved in all the meetings, in all of the social events (front line 11).*

Involving employees in decision making by listening to their opinions and suggestions seems to affect their feelings. They feel highly respected. They see themselves as an influential factor rather than merely as a number. Some informants refer to the health and financial schemes of the company as unique services providing benefits for its employees. This will be addressed in more detail within the managerial practices section.

6.2.2 Customer orientation culture

Building culture within the company appears to be a sustainable and on-going process. This is verified in the way informants speak. Regardless of individual differences (culture background, length of employment), it could be seen that they all speak the same language (using same vocabularies) and share the same values and beliefs. That is supported by the one best way philosophy which indicates a framework within which employees can work to the strengths of his/her own

personality. An important question here is whether this philosophy restricts the employees? . Is "the one best way" contradicting the idea of valuing employees and their freedom in work?

The answer can be seen in the next sections where the data address this issue.

6.2.2.1 Giving "Best" customer service

Training seems to be the first step which underpins the idea to consider the customer as the number one priority in the minds of front line employees.

> *I think it's really just the training that we've had always puts us towards think of the customer first rather than just another every day job so it's like the value.... we value all of our customers(front line10)*

Twelve out of fifteen front- staff interviewed pointed out that giving customers the best service is their main driver. "Best" customer service for the front line informants seemed to be presented in several ways. Firstly, it was discussed as being knowledgeable, honest friendly but professional, and giving customers lot of choices as mentioned by these employees;

> *We give them our knowledge, that we always give them honesty and we give them exactly what they need and help them to find what they want (front line 13).*

> *I guess...always sort of trying to offer clients with the very best service that we can and to try and be efficient, quite calm and knowledgeable, professional, always give them choice (front line1).*

One of the informants emphasised the idea of giving the best choices even if these will be more expensive than others. However customers will feel the difference in the whole experience (better value for their money). Taking into consideration that the company achieves from 60% to 80% repeats, this means that price is not always the main motive. Good customer service seems to also play a major part.

> *The most important driver for.... as being profitable and being success is your good your customer service because again what we're trying to do is that.....in terms of unbeatable you talk about the experience and might be you found this option a little bit more expensive but by your dealing with us, more*

friendly, it's a better all around service from beginning to end so I mean just good customer service is, in treatment client well is, the main driver for everything, for profit, for everything(frontline 9).

Secondly all employees interviewed seemed to enjoy selling the holidays, they talked about how they all have the same mind set of loving to travel as they have travelled a lot so they recommend the best. Thirdly, best customer service was shown in terms of following up with customers to make sure things are on the right track or establishing whether service needs to be improved.

You got your clients you know you want to make money, having.... sending people on a trip they enjoy is quite a satisfactory to yourself you know specially when they come back to you and we...this is why we call our clients before and after they trip to make sure that they had a good time or you know what can be improved so I think ya (front line 2)

Finally, "going the extra step" is key to their behaviour. Searching for extra information about the destinations, showing the advantages and disadvantages of each travel provider (airlines for example) so that the customer can be aware of his choice, collecting extra information from colleagues or other sources if they have not visited the destination rather than showing ignorance. These all mean delivering on the real needs of customers and gaining them as repeats who may lead to more referrals, more business and more money for them and the company.

Oh for each customer you really do want to go that extra little bit because that means he will come to you again and again and also you have your personal desire to probably have a good time... ya you don't want to send someone away in a holiday and not be a good thing so for each customer you just want your own merits, you just want them to go away have a great time, have something... to have them with the feeling that they are gonna away with something you have done (front line 12)

6.2.2.2 Employees building rapport with customers

All the informants stress how important it is to build relations with customers in order to retain them. Travel is still a luxury product and, by establishing this relationship, the customers' trust can be gained and they can be encouraged to spend significant sums of money.

I certainly have form as much of a personal relationship with my clients as possible (front-line4)

Build rapport over the phone....like relationships so we have to get the customers to trust us, to you know they have to handle over quite a lot of money and they need to be out of trust that we are going to give them really good service and give them the holiday that they want so we have to build up rapport with our personality by sounding professional but friendly and reliable (front line 1).

Each front line staff member appeared to be keen to build up his/her own client base which provides the opportunity to turn their clients into repeats. Repeats represent an average of 60% to 70% of the business. The company system supports the relationship idea by stating that the customer whose phone you answered becomes yours forever unless he/she is other staff member's customer. The common ground between front line and customers (loving travel) eases and speeds up building this relationship. Some branches only work over the phone, so for them building a friendly relationship with customers eases the interaction and helps them gain customer trust. Some of the informants describe this relationship with customers as the most enjoyable part of the work and they prefer to work as front line staff rather than managers to deal with people not with the business.

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Because it is all over the phone no....it's hard to judge like sometimes you have a customer and the first time you phone them that would be a bit harassed, very short and we'll be like oh I don't think they want really to speak to me but as I talked to them they'll start to warm up and to become friendly and almost like your friends by the end of it sometimes they'll send you card for a thank you for sending them on a holiday. It is just there is so many different types of customers you can go with like some customers you can be more friendly with and have like a joke and laugh and other customers would prefer to be more professional. I am always professional with everybody (front line 10)

6.2.2.3 Gauging the customers

This concept relates to how to anticipate your customers' needs. This necessitates asking the right questions to know exactly what they want, matching what they want with what is possible, finding out their main concerns (price or quality of service)

and be aware of religious or the ethnic background. All of this will help to deliver on the real needs of customers and satisfy them.

> *It's about asking the right questions first, it's about establishing what they really want. Some people don't want mess around and a matter in fact black and white, this is what I want, this how I gonna do it, how much is that whereas other people want to talk about destination, talk about where they're going, talk about other options so you have to constantly gauging people all the time on the phone (front-line8)*

> *I mean...the customers are very important firstly because without customers, there would be no Fun Travel so. Every customer is different you need to find out...you need to chat to them for a while because everyone likes different things, everyone wants different things so this way you have to find out and when you're doing a holiday for someone you have to find out a bit about them, what they want, what's most important to them and then you have to tailor a holiday to their needs really so there is sort of matching...matching their wants and desire to their needs because everyone has quite different so but I think over here you get so many different ethnicity so every ethnicity is different so(front line 2).*

6.2.2.4 Adapt to the variety of customers

All front line respondents report the wide variety of customers that they have to deal with each day. Ranging from business customers and retired people to backpackers, everyone has diverse requirements with a different budget. The main idea is to adapt to customers personalities and needs.

> *the key I suppose when you work in sales is to adapt your personality to suit the person that you are speaking to... you know whether that somebody who is anxious and looking to organize something urgent, they are just look for a quick and efficient service and they are not looking for a rapport between you and them (front-line 4)*

> *Different people like to be treated differently   (front line 9).*

> *Each person is taking on own individual merits because everybody is very different. some people have different ideas for example of spending or different ideas of the types of holiday they quite like to have so each person is taken on an individual(Front line 12).*

6.2.2.5 Value each customer

It appears that all front line staff members believe to the importance of valuing each customer. For them customers are the same in the degree of respect and concern that they merit. This leads to a good reputation for customer service as each customer will feel valued whether he/she books with them or only makes an enquire.

I treat everybody exactly the same and as fairly as possible (front line 11).

Everyone you treat the same... I don't....somebody say look you not gonna book out. You just have to keep going and know that hopefully afterwards you get better customer but you treat everyone the same with the same respect and the same attitude and everyone deserves your time. You been if...... I mean sometimes you think that they are wasting your time not so you have to treat everyone the same (front line 13).

6.2.3 Managerial philosophy

Table 6.2 displays the main features of the management approach in Fun Travel. Five main characteristics mark out this management approach as follows;

Table 6.2 The Management approach in Fun Travel

Theme	Dimensions	Illustrative Example(s)
Flat structure	Not many managerial layers. Horizontal leadership policy. Employees are involved in the business with the managers as one big team. Quick response to business initiatives.	*It's felt like flat company in terms of you know... all I can do just phone up the head of Fun Travel in the UK and speak to him but there is no need to. We are very small teams, you don't see as hierarchy or triangle you don't use words employees or colleagues (front line 9).* *They offer a very horizontal leadership policy like people work side by side with each other (front line 4).* *There is no them and us going on. Places that I've worked in before has been like a hierarchy but managers here aren't afraid to role out the slave that she get involved if I really busy so (name) our area manager comes and she will happily take on the phone and she will get on with it and help us in what we're doing and so there isn't nest where the ants of the front-line and then there the queens of the nest (front line 8).* *It's not of that stuffiness that I used to have in a hotels you know you can just pick up the directors phone and he answers there is no secretaries in the company so you access everybody really quickly that's good for making the company I imagine more dynamic so they are able to response to change quicker so but now they are seem to be very sociable, very relax professional company which I have been looking for after ten years of something a bit more restrictive (front line 11).*

Bottom up management style	Two way path between mangers and staff. Easy to work the way up to the top. Involve the employees to feel part of the team Listen and value employees' opinions	*it's really well-managed...you can interact with managers in all levels...you can communicate with you know my mediate manager and then the people right at the top, they often come in, they speak to us directly, they like to know our opinions and our views so ya I feel comfortable going and talking to any to any sort of manager about any ideas or ambitious that I might have and it seems like they listen to you so ya but it's very relaxed as well you know you have...there is a two way path between managers and staff (front line1).* *Everyone moves up through the company so people who are in charge of you have actually done your job before so they understand pitfalls and benefits of it (front line 4).* *I have been involved in all the meetings, in all of the social events so basically for me to be able to pick up as much as I can as soon as possible and as quickly as possible so maximum exposure (front line 11).*
Approachable management with open communication system	Family type kind of structure. Interaction and communication are open between employees and any manager even the MD. Meet up with MD in regular bases. Promote interaction through social events. Raise any issue to any level.	*I think the environment here is very friendly and open. Its kind like a family, a work family, I just feel comfortable with everybody. I was think if I had a problem with anything I would always....we have someone to speak to and we wouldn't have to keep it bottled up (front line 10).* *It means that it's quite approachable like my...when I first arrived at Fun Travel I was in the lift with (name) the managing director and he asked me what I thought about the uniform so I told him. It was....you know I think most people would have been quite scared and he took it all on board and you know appreciate of the feedback so there is no massive fear in this company whereas a lot of companies will install the fear of being fired from*

	Objections and opinions are discussed and taken into consideration.	*your bosses you know you're always being watched over whereas here it's a you got a bit more freedom to move I think...it's a good fun company to work for (front line 2).*
		They kind of promote interaction you know they offer us polls twice a year where everybody comes together and there is monthly events where everybody comes together so that you are not isolated and you even though you are in the small store and there is may be four or five of you, you still part of a larger group so you do feel that there is links there. Ammm, well I get to speak to my senior managers practically daily so it is not an intimidating environment because you have open communication and certainly there is a level of understanding here because they have done my job before so I've never had any issues with the management style. It's been one of the most open and honest ones that I have worked for so(,front line4)
Ownership	Employees have complete autonomy over their work with top supervision for support. Training, knowledge and information do exist to prepare you to the independent level of responsibility.	*The general thing that Fun Travel is that you're given all the support you need but at the same time all of the independent and autonomy that you need to do your job so you're left keep what you need to be a success yourself but at the same time all your support structures are there, there're regular training, there is like kind of leadership chain that always... you are always in contact with them(front line 9).*
		It is very good in the sense you have ownership over your... you know you can have taken your own business and how you deal with things on the day to day bases with the majority of the responsibility almost all of the responsibility then on the individual and it's up to you to make you know a

		lot more of the decisions on what you been working and doing (front line 12).
Social atmosphere	Monthly gathering to promote interaction in each team. Annual conference to bring all the regions together. Annual poll night to celebrate and reward individual achievements.	*They're very sociable company so for me in the sense unbeatable is that you know a probably had the most fun working here than I have with any other company you know every month we have our buzz nights in all the stores get together so it's very sociable, well rewarded (front line 7).* *We have got our up-coming, UK conference next week and that's the whole of the company in the UK getting together in London so that's nice. I like the fact that all of the results are on daily bases from the area are all published so everybody can see how well everybody is doing (front line 11).*

As perceived by the respondents, the company pursues an integrative leadership approach. This approach is evident through features such as the presence of just five managerial layers within the whole organisation, managers working side by side with front line staff (no separate offices) and limited administrative tiers within the company so communications are open and direct up to the Managing Director. All informants feel involved to a great extent. At the branch level, they are involved in all meetings and their suggestions are implemented if they are considered and found to be reasonable. At the head office level, they are represented in the meetings or at least their opinions are taken seriously before any decision is made. For them, all of these lead to a relaxed and dynamic environment. Employees feel esteemed and they are partners rather than inferiors, as evidenced in discussion of the bottom-up management style and open communication approach later in this chapter. Some informants had experience of contacting decision makers with suggestions and opinions and they found a good response. They reported that their suggestions were taken on board. Front line staff feel responsible and part of the company. This leads to another feature which relates to decision making. This appears to start from

bottom up. It is supported by open communications and meetings within the company which engage all staff down to the front line. It is also sustained by the opportunities of progression front line staff have to move up to the level of decision making positions.

Ownership is another key feature of the company's management approach. Front line members state that, in theory, they run their own business. Informants reported that they have adequate power in dealing with their own customers. They can take decisions and make choices. Training programmes prepare them well for this stage. Ownership gives a lot of pride to employees in what they are doing and gives them a lot of responsibility. They enjoy the feeling that they do it all on their own but there is backup if needed.

The social ambience within the company links the entire widespread branch network in all cities. Informants state that this is an important opportunity to meet all other teams and stay in touch. It is usually a rewarding event as well. Within branches, a family atmosphere is noticeable. Openness, freedom in expressing opinions and team working all support that atmosphere. Front line staff members feel that they are working in a family, fun environment. Informants confirm they work in a great atmosphere and feel great about working in the company. They are confident that they are willing to continue with the company due to the great atmosphere and the supportive management culture. These points are reflected in the following illustrative quotations;

> *I think it's enjoyable, it's kind of personal feel towards it rather than...rather than say working for a supermarket way, you just wear a uniform, you don't seem to have any you know individualism there whereas you can be your own person, the shops good fun to work in, we get to play our own music just little things like that can make....make a big difference you know and we have social meetings once a month and they put on events like if you do well then they have a poll you can go to once a year like a big conference and this year it's in South Africa so you....everything is paid for you to go to South Africa for just have a party for a few days so. So, I think as a large corporate company they still I think quite personal and it is an enjoyable place to work (Front-line2)*

> *The fact that there is transparency, you can see what everybody is doing and how they 're working for you, you can see the people that they are working*

around you plus the company seem to care about you as an employee and they do that by helping to develop you all of the time. So, ya i think that all these things are attractive (front-line8).

6.3 Internal marketing practices

This section addresses how front-line employees perceive internal marketing practices in order to explore how they affect their internal environment and their external role towards the customer.

6.3.1   Employer/Employee branding

Questions relating to this theme aimed to address the company's efforts concerning employee and employer branding.

- How does the company internalize its main brand?
- How do employees see the company as a workplace?
- How does the company market its work environment and how do employees learn about the company?

The company's main promotional slogan is ''unbeatable''. This seems to be well-understood by employees. Firstly, it expresses the price guarantee policy of offering the best prices. This is due to company endeavours to secure best deals with its suppliers. Therefore, it seems that the company logo reflects the price as first competitive advantage which can differentiate the company.

For our customers...it's unbeatable in price without doubt...we always price beat (front line 1).

oh well, we offer a price beat guarantee for clients so they know that they can get an unbeatable price like we will take any quote that somebody brings in and we will beat the price so we will always gonna be the best priced for them (front line4).

I think it describes itself as unbeatable primarily in a marketing sense, of the first you can gather from that would be....would be pricewise because we're such a huge company, we have a lot of...a lot of parts we get a good great deals with hotels, with all our suppliers, with the Airlines as well and they give us fantastic fares (front line6).

Secondly, this means that top customer service is a priority and this includes the best holiday promise policy. This policy gives the customer a £100 refund if the holiday is not "perfect". There is also a 24 hour help line which means a constant contact point for customers. The aim is to ensure that customers benefit from the whole experience of contact with the company's people who strive to give their customers exactly what they want and seek the information that customers need. Front line staff are of the view that they always seek to go "the extra mile" for their customers. This kind of service cannot be valued in money. The social atmosphere leads to a fun and relaxed environment which is valued by all informants. For example,

> *This is like things like twenty four emergency assistants, I was meaning that's why it's unbeatable you can always refer to someone anytime the whole day. The perfect holiday pledge so we give someone £100 back if they don't sort of absolutely enjoy the holiday as much as they could do (front line 6).*

> *This means to me that they will always strive to get the best for every customer, every customer is treated as an individual, that we will always get the best fare to get them what they are exactly looking for and we are quite a friendly company as well(front line 10).*

Thirdly, "unbeatable" is also reflected in the type of employees that are recruited. All front-line staff reported that they see themselves as the best in the field. Company employees have university degrees as a must; speak multiple languages, are well-trained, have personalities with high communication skills and are very knowledgeable as they have all travelled extensively. These attributes are all relayed to customers and reflected in customers' experience within the company.

> *They don't employ just anybody; you have to have experience in the travel industry. You have to have good personality, communication skills so you have to be able to relay all of these things over to a client in order to win the business (front line 2).*

> *I think we're a lot more knowledgeable, we're a lot more trained and well travelled company and we have better resources for our customer. We have more knowledge to get better fares and better holidays; we've all travelled a lot as well. A lot of travel companies their employees haven't really travelled a lot whereas with Fun Travel you must have travelled at least two continents before you can actually work for them (front line 3).*

All informants from the front line staff consider Fun Travel an attractive workplace for a variety of reasons as shown in Table 6.3. Most of the reasons have been repeated by several employees.

Table 6.3 "Fun Travel as attractive workplace"

one of the top 100 companies to wor**k**
Based in many countries
Great experience can be taken over to any workplace.
Caring and developing employees all the time
Good income (well rewarded and uncapped earning)
Social atmosphere.
The autonomy factor
Security

Front line staff members are clear in expressing that the company is an attractive workplace. In Table 6.3, social atmosphere features as a theme that is explored further here. Reasons include the sense that employees pride themselves on working in a company which has a reputation as one of the best 100 companies to work for. Likewise, the internal environment as a sociable, supportive kind of environment seems to have great effect on the ways employees perceive their company. The idea of independency at work with leadership support is another attractiveness factor.

> *Fun Travel is that you're given all the support you need but at the same time all of the independent and autonomy that you need to do your job so you're left keep what you need to be a success yourself but at the same time all your support structures are there. You are getting out is the whole experience. For the people who work here...always features regularly in the top one hundred companies to work for...you at the other so it's good company, it's uncapped earnings for all employees so I mean there is no limits there(front line 9).*

Informants are confident that their income and rewards are high compared to any other company in the industry. This is due to the fact that there is an uncapped earnings potential. All of them appreciate quick progression throughout the company if he/she is willing and has the ability to work hard. The qualifications that they obtain through working in the company have value to their work elsewhere. The transparency policy gives another dimension to the quality of the workplace as it gives the employees the security they value.

Because you can be reward very well, it's sort of...sort of one of the best rewarded company to work for within travel and then also they have lots of other benefits you know they are always.....they look after their staff quite well. There is lots of parties and functions and things like that and again I like the fact that you can progress very quickly, I am already applying for like an assistant team leader position and I've nearly been here for five month so you know you can really progress quickly if you want to. Star (start) is really attractive (front line 1).

They've got Fun Travel all over the world so now I have worked here, I am originally from New Zealand so I can work in Australia as well that's where Fun Travel is started. I believe I am going to be...I can get a job anywhere in the world as a travel agent now because I have worked for Fun Travel but it is...ya it is an attractive company to work for. You can....you can ride in this company quite quickly and you can have...if you are prepared to work hard (front line 2).

The company has many channels to market itself to the top employee segments. Front-line staff who have been working in the industry were previously aware of the company. Some others knew about the company from recruitment agencies. Job websites seems to be another way to learn about the company.

Through a recruitment agency so that's how...I saw it online and then they explained it to me more fully (front line1).

I used to...we used to...Fun Travel actually sells (the name of his x company) as a product so I knew quite a lot about Fun Travel and I would speak to people from Fun Travel you know many times a day selling our product to Fun Travel agents(front line 2).

One of the respondents highlights the way the company describes itself on its website.

The way that they word that... that is quite attractive (front line11)

The main means of marketing the company workplace is the company's reputation. Fun Travel seems to build a strong and attractive image as a unique work environment by keeping its place within the Times Top 100 best companies to work for.

6.3.2 Recruitment procedures

Recruitment procedures within Fun Travel appear to be well organized. The responses give an impression of seriousness and confidence in how this is planned in the company. The respondents highlight three main areas within the process. These are the process itself and its steps, the criteria of selecting front-line employees and the issue of personality versus skills. With regard to the first of these, the stages of the interview are likely to measure certain competences of the job role. For informants, the process was thorough and quick.

> *Thorough, yes very very thorough (front line 6)*

> *Everything happen so quickly and then so I think for me handing my C.V to me starting training, it was about 2 weeks so I think that's really really...it's quite a quick you know so that's what I enjoyed about that (front line 2)*

Firstly, interested candidates submit their C.Vs through the company website. Selected candidates receive a telephone interview to check their ability to communicate with others over the telephone. Questions seem to be smooth and friendly. They evolve around experience in customer service and what kind of critical situations they have been through and extracting themselves from.

> *Recruitment's done online mostly so you can go online and download your C.V online and then our head office recruitment gets in touch so it's not done within any shop, it's done through head office and they first of all go through C.Vs and then they'll narrow it down and then they'll do phone interviews so they'll phone the candidates for the whole country, it's one team based in London and then they'll arrange interviews with the area leader so it's phone....phone interviews then there is the interviews with the area leader and then there is in store days as well so once they've got through that stage and the area leader thinks they would be good in a particular store, they then come into our shop and meet us and we can say if we like them and they can say if they like us as well..if they don't then we can.....but ultimately it's the team leader's decision whether to employ them or not (front line 3)*

The C.V measures educational and travel experience. Telephone interviews give an impression of personality and sales skills. Finally, the face to face interview aims to get ideas about how they can get with along with others. This is designed to select the right people who are compatible with the company culture and the job role.

The last stage, in some areas such as Scotland, involves an in-store day where the candidate can go to store and spend the day in order to have clearer idea about the nature of the job. For the branch manager and the rest of the team, it is an opportunity to judge if that person is going to get on easily with them. Informants acknowledged the value of the idea in that it is open and honest. At interview, the company is very open about the responsibility of the role and the stress of having targets and working on a commission basis.

> *I think it's really good because it gives you chance to ask people working in the job what they think about and how difficult it is and what is the ups and what is the downs and they don't do that anymore and I think that would really help new employees know what they are in for with the job (front line 5)*

Area leaders get involved in the process. This is seen to save money for the company as each area leader knows exactly what they want in terms of the kind of person they require. The alternative is to spend money on preparing an employee and then finding that she/ he is not suitable for the job. The in store day is seen to help to keep harmony in branches. The informants reported some criteria that they identified through the interview process and which they thought provided the basis for their selection.

> *I guess they were looking for people who are confident primarily, who have the ability to think on their feet, who can talk to clients professionally, who are quite driven and ambitious because we are in a sales environment so you have to be quite driven (front line 1).*

> *I think it's really about my travel experience and also I like to talk, I think you've got to be quite sociable to do this kind of job and I am actually genuinely interested in peoples travel* (front line 6).

More than half of informants concurred with the idea that they had been selected mainly for their personality. Some of them had not worked before in the travel industry. They also considered that their travel experience and their ability to sell to people or get on well with them as important in addition to personality factors. They stressed that skills can be taught, however you cannot teach someone to be communicative or warm to people. Others see it a mixture of both skills and personality. They perceive their experience as skills.

I think they looked for bubbly personality. I think they look for higher education like they want you to....you know had a degree or something like this but really I think that's just they want to know that you can learn the systems well and operate the systems and that kind of thing. I don't think you have to have a further degree. I think you just need to be able to quickly learn new things I guess and have the personality so I can sell (front line 5)

I would say personality... a mixture of both Ahhh...you know if I had no sales experience, if I had never travelled you know if I just worked in a grocery store all my life they will be unlikely to take me on but I would say personality probably out with it   You know the fact of having sales experience and travelled is obviously a big benefit but I think the personality is probably the more deciding factor than anything else (front line 7).

Aside from a university degree, the main criterion of choosing front line staff appears to be the personality dimension and the ability to get on well with people. Employees have to be flexible to adapt their personalities to the various types of customers. Besides they have to be passionate about travel with wide experience of travelling around the world.

It can be concluded that staff are chosen mainly for their personality, quantifications (high degree) and travel experience which can ease the learning process and work throughout their career in the company. Informants, who reported that they have been chosen due to their skills, when they started to explain the skills they have been chosen for, they spoke about personality dimensions.

6.3.3 Training system

The training system within the company is divided into basic training at the start of employment followed by continuous training in branches and in head office. Basic training is intensive and continues for three weeks at head office. It is seen to prepare the candidate effectively in order to be ready to start working in a branch. It deals with systems, customer interaction and an exam to test applicants in these areas. Informants describe it as in-depth.

So far with training, for my first three weeks in training was very good. It was very good course. It was very fast based but we did learn everything that they said that we were going to so that was very good (front line 11).

It's very in depth like... I know that was training you will never know everything until you're in the job but they did set us up for the basic (front line 10).

without that basic training that would have taken I believe probably about...I would have delayed where I am now probably about 3 or 4 month just from learning the system probably you know it was, I am very glad we went through the training because it provides us with the basic skills and knowledge for this job that you can build on so (front line 2).

Front-line staff members help to extend training through their feedback of the experience. Training seems to have changed over time as details differed slightly between informants.

I personally trained for six weeks but they have been refining the training since they introduced that and it's now down to three and a half weeks, they have excluded some of the more complicated details based on the feedback we gave them and started basin that out and new consultant aren't you know overwhelmed so they do take feedback very well and having certainly tailor the training because of that(front line 4)

Changes to training seem to be a development which responds to the varying needs of the business and internal survey feedback. This reflects the dynamic nature of the company in adapting changes according to business needs.

Some of the informants perceive it as more than training; it is orientation to all people as they meet head office colleagues and are aware of the nature of the company's working systems. Therefore recruits will be aware of the bigger picture and of all the company's social practices. All trainees are accommodated in one location throughout the three weeks. The gathering creates a feeling of being part of a big team that is very important for a large company so as to maintain a level of control over relatively independent branches. Taking new-hire employees out of the work environment for training is seen to be better than locating them immediately in branches where colleagues may be too busy to teach them.

Although all informants acknowledged the value and quality of their basic training, they deem that the real work environment is the best form of training, being in front of the customer or on the telephone. Employees learn from each booking. This is the nature of the travel industry as each itinerary or booking is a new experience. At the end of the first phase in the training, each trainee takes what he/she has learned and

seeks to apply it in the branch. They then return and produce feedback on their experiences. After this they aim to pass the end of induction exam in order to start working directly in their branches. Continuous training is the second feature of the training system in the company. According to the majority of the respondents, this is the branch manager's responsibility. In most of the branches, it is also a daily process. Training includes morning sessions with managers or area leaders. One of the informants linked the special criteria of a people-oriented company with the daily training process which seeks to focus on intelligence and speed in learning. One of the new starters focused on the support that he received at the beginning from his trainer who supported his training process until he is totally independent in his work. Managers and experienced employees help in supporting new employees in their improvement. New starters are always physically located between two experienced colleagues to enable them to ask for help if needed. Depending on managers as central to the continuous training process reflects their high qualifications which enable them to be responsible for such important processes.

> *We've regularly had people come down from head office and took us through other parts, when new products come out we get talk through those, when there is major changes in products that we use all the time we get talk through that plus we have reps from companies all over the world come talk to us all the time so we regularly updated on what's going on (front line 8).*

Another aspect of daily training is supplier -related where an airline or hotel comes to present new products. A majority of the informants regard this training highly as it gives them updates on new products that they can use to diversify their supply. Optional training is always available in head office if staff wish to improve any aspect of their work. Front line staff in London use this option as a refresher session for two hours before coming into the branch. By contrast, this is seen as one of the company's weaknesses in that these sessions are only available at head office. Only one informant referred to training as a sporadic process as it only appears when some new product is launched.

> *Ya, they're always willing to help you with any other issues you may have. Whose consult training sessions coming up about destinations that are popular or we have suppliers that we deal with them will come over and will*

do a training session on their products so we know how to sell them better(front line 7).

You get a lot of support… from our trainer who came around and spent a day with me here. So ya I still speak to him (front line1).

6.3.4 The Reward system

Rewards can be an important way of encouraging extra effort when that will be reflected in employee performance appraisal and the benefits they obtain.
The way Fun Travel operates relating to its reward system is seen to be unique for the sector. It gives a sense of how a company can remunerate its' employees both financially and intrinsically through how hard they work and how excellent their service is to their customers. It gives employees a sense that they share the income with the company so any success comes to them first before it comes to the company.
The primary monetary reward for front line staff is pay. The system of pay is commission based. Each front line employee is required to achieve certain monthly and annual targets. First of all the cost of the post should be covered and then the sky is the limit in terms of uncapped earnings. The company pays them a constant basic salary and then the commission they can make is the difference between that basic pay and how much money they wish want to earn each month.

> *we're rewarded based on our commission levels which are unprecedented, we are based on targets and when we had them that comes directly back to ourselves and to our store, we have store targets we have individual targets, we have area targets across the board when that comes back it comes back directly to you rather than just the company as a whole(front line 4)*

Throughout the interviews, it was clear that informants appreciate the distinctiveness of the system. When targets are achieved, they benefit first. None of the respondents denied how hard it is to work under the commission system and to achieve targets. However, this system is compatible with one of the main philosophies of the company which is a ''work hard play hard environment''.

> *I think it's fair, if you work hard then you will be rewarded for working hard (front line 8).*

> *The fact that the harder you work the more you rewarded is ultimately why I work here (front line 4).*

Some informants believe that the revenue they need to generate for their positions is too high and the basic salary is low. Then again, the unlimited earnings potential after this stage is "brilliant".

> *Cost of seat, which is basically the cost of your being here, your wag, electricity, toilet roll, tea bags......that part. Everything over that certainly becomes what's called uncapped and your commission possibility is going through the roof (front line 8).*

> *cost of seat is too high and I think it can make people really really stressed to try and achieve that high target but at the same time it drives people forward so I understand why they do it but I just think personally it's too high and I think the basic is too low (front line 1).*

Front line staff members see the system as both an incentive and as pressure at the same time. This perception differs between informants according to the individual's personality. It is a pressure in the off season and during tough financial times. It is also stressful when you cannot secure enough bookings from customers. One of the informants highlights the holiday system, which obliges employees even when they take days off, to achieve the same target for the whole month, which adds to the pressure of the commission system.

> *It can be frustrating and there is a lot of pressure but when the bookings are coming in and you're doing very well then you know the commission becomes a very good incentive so i am initially overall it is an incentive to do well obviously because that very usually the more commission , more money in your pocket but at the same time it can be...it can be very hard , it can be a lot of pressure specially when we come to times like November, December, January can be quite quiet and you know a lot of people (front line 2).*

> *I think it's quite good because it gives you ......strives you to do better rather than just sitting here and it doesn't really matter if I booked the holiday (front line 10).*

Some informants stated that anyone will feel anxiety if he/she cannot handle hard times with their sales ability and turn the situation around. Others perceived the targets as motivation within which to work.

If you cannot really cope with it then I suppose that you're in the wrong job so you need just to get on with it. Personally I would...I would much rather ward to a commission, I would much rather have a challenge that I have to go against (front line 6).

Both and I think pressure isn't necessarily negative thing, it's a good pressure, it's motivating, you have got to be an optimistic person to think like that otherwise you would just be too stressed and I know that if you go at the end of the month and you weren't hitting your target , ya this is pressure but you need to turn that round into well you can do it, there is still five more days left or something (front line 11).

Other non-monetary rewards are also in place such as free flights and holidays to destinations over the weekends. There is a small budget to 'spoil' employees on good days in the form of free breakfasts or snacks.

There are different incentives a lot at the time to win a holiday...a flight or to...you know if you sell certain things (front line 3).

In the branch we are... we are rewarded we've got like a pot of goals and a... it's not really rewarded, we're just always given like we're given.....Scott will bring us some breakfast if we've been good or if we've got a good week, he will bring us some breakfast or even if we have a bad week and we need a bit of moral, he may be bring us in like doughnuts.. It's not like a reward (front line 10).

Less tangible rewards complement monetary ones. They range from an announcement of exceptional performance on the company intranet to reward events. At a regional level, monthly buzz nights are there to incentivise the best performer in the branches. At a national level, there is the annual conference in one of the most desirable destinations in the world.

They're always running incentives so you know if you sell so much on certain airline or you know so much of a new product that they've introduced you know you win up a small price and then whoever's figures are the most improved they will have you know a table of that and at the Christmas and summer conferences (front line 7).

There are other rewards as well, you know there is incentives, recognition on a monthly bases, buzz nights where you know all the area gets together and people are rewarded you know and on the national level the annual poll then there is the global poll, people of course are reminded of. I mean if you

do well and if you make a big sale then you know you 'll get like you'll congratulate by your team so on from the smalls level of just been kind of well done of making that booking to like been on stage, global poll, South Africa (front line 9).

Despite different perceptions of the pressure that the commission system causes, all informants bar one, who has problems in achieving her targets, appreciates the reward system in the company. They describe it positively as fair and logical. It is seen as reasonable that the more you work, the more you get remunerated. Some informants compared that with other workplaces where all people are equal in payment regardless of their work effort. Two of the new start informants value the justice of the reward system in toping up the basic salary for them during the first three months until they can build their customer base and get more customers. Informants also recognized the clarity of the reward system. Everything is transparent to all the staff. You know what other people are achieving which motivates you. Also, it gives the employees a sense of trust for their company.

It's very logical and makes people work really hard (front line 1).

I would say it's fair...it's very fair and it's open so you know what you can achieve, what the rest do (front line 3).

I think it keeps...keeps your job more interesting, it makes the day go quicker. If you've got something you want to achieve. If I am in the job where it doesn't matter if I do really well, if I do not so well, if everybody gets the same pay you know if everybody gets exactly the same, no matter if they're doing a good job or a bad job(front line 6).

6.3.5 Internal communications

Communication is viewed as a motivational tool within the internal environment of any organisation. Informants perceived company internal communications in different ways. All informants described it positively as open, smooth, speedy, constant and efficient. The main communication tool is the internal intranet of the company. Daily news is uploaded on the intranet which includes product updates, new contracts with airlines or hotels, new incentives for exceptional personal

achievement and even personal news (someone has had a baby, for example). Everyday has its ten top tips for the best way to do things in your job.

> *Within the company we have a daily news that comes out every morning and that might have new contracts with the Airlines, lots of different....it can be anything from a new incentive or if someone had a baby or you know it's everything on this one news that's the main form and everything else is e-mail (front line 3).*

All informants report that they mainly communicate via e-mail using the company's bespoke server. Some informants confined their communications to their peers in the office. Some of them explain how internal communications binds the team work concept within the company.

> *I communicate all the time with my team who I work with, that's who I mainly focus with and that's what where we ...that's where we are pull together and communicate with each other to set around standards (front line 1).*

> *Other things...there is such a wide range of jobs to do with the banking and F posted and statements extra, paid off suppliers and everything like that. I think the team work there is really important, we all have to work together to...to.... If you worked together, you basically achieve (front line 6).*

Others are open to chat with other colleagues in other branches about destinations and any product information they may need. Team working is needed for high quality customer service and to gain customer trust. Therefore, private conversation is available as a communications medium to connect people for enquiries or destination information exchange. Some informants regarded this as their knowledge base (library of knowledge where you can obtain information from other colleagues) where you can load any question and receive quick and accurate answers.

> *we are also all signed in to server that makes your e- mail, you can private chat people so that if it's perhaps an area where you are not familiar you can private chat someone who is more familiar and use them as knowledge base so it is certainly set up for instant communication as well as a source of knowledge to....that gets added to you as a kind a library of knowledge through the internet as well (front line 4)*

Some informants highlight the role of communication in helping them to feel part of the bigger community, understand what is going on in all other areas and how they are all linked to each other. Area leaders seem to play a vital role in communicating business to the branches so that even company business plans are also communicated.

> *It's good. we get a lot of internal communication from all our different departments so it's good because we feel part of the bigger community, we understand what's going on in all the different areas and how we're all related to one another so it's very helpful hearing from everybody from all the different departments (front line 7).*

A minority of informants drew attention to a type of poor communication when there is ambiguity in uploading contracts or delay in issuing tickets which can cause problems with customers but this is not seen to be a major issue. Communication in these cases needs to be taken more seriously. This could be seen as a kind of role conflict rather than a miscommunication.

> *O.K., oh ya so we working a lot with the ticketing centre, that can be quite frustrating. They don't really understand our role that well so sometimes we have issues. We work a lot with our product team and they're great actually, they are very good...sometimes there are problems but there are in any company so ya I...we communicate with them extendedly…everyday(front line 1).*

6.3.6 Empowerment

Freedom and autonomy do exist very clearly throughout the company in varying degrees. The extent of empowerment depends upon the manager and the employee's personality, the situation and the cost involved.

> *It depends completely on the problem in hand. if it's a simple case you need to extend someone stay in hotel and they wanted longer or you forgot to do something and you obviously have the power to change that yourself (front line 13)*

Informants affirmed that common problems are not complicated. Most customers' problems can be solved easily and directly without any cost involved.

I would say for customers' problems it is really sent it in yourself to work at fixing them and the majority of the time that you are able to do so (front line 12)

Initially, procedures are taken to eliminate problems with customers. For instance, there is an itinerary to be signed by customers which includes all the trip details and dates. This will help to specify the responsible of any fault. Some compensation policies are offered by the company, that help employees to satisfy the concerns of customers, such as the perfect holiday pledge policy which includes £ 100 voucher to their next booking. Problems go higher only if customers are very unhappy and cannot agree to any resolution. However this is generally not a company or front-line error.

Every situation is different. You have to establish...if it was our fault or the customer's fault you know a lot of the time the customer will see us as the one who has done the wrong but often at the end of when....one of these (show me an itinerary), your job is to read that, make sure your name is right, make sure that all the dates are correct and all these conditions you understand and then you have to sign (front line 2).

We also have a perfect holiday pledge which every consultant can give a voucher, someone is not having a perfect experience you can give them a £100 voucher for their next holiday so we can issue that to the customer (front line 3)

The obvious objective here is that each employee is keen to help the customer and solve the issue so that they can negotiate about the itinerary issue and identify where fault lies. This means that customer interests come first.

Front line staff members are the first contact point with customers. They are very much encouraged to face up to solve problems. It is rare that these are raised with the customer complaints department. In theory, front line staff run their own business. Each one is responsible for his/her mistakes. Any mistake is an individual responsibility so it is deducted from his/her commission.

The majority of time you would..... Well, if it is a personal error then the cost is for yourself then that would then come away from your monthly targets and any numeration you have to make or any compensation made then that comes from yourself personally. Ahhh occasions where there is someone else... Is...

> *That Ahhh... Suppliers fault then generally then the company would take (front line 12)*

> *Pretty much....ya we are very much run our own business so any mistakes that we make, we are responsible for which obviously also means that if we can resolve those ourselves then we do anything that we can to fix those because any mistakes that we make will cost us personally, it's not very often that the company wears the cost so ya we....that also impairs us make the decisions that we think are right (front line 1).*

The relationship between employees and customers smoothes the issues in relation to most types of problem much of the time through open discussion. This allows parties to reach an acceptable solution due to the level of trust which has been built. Some informants stated that the best way is to be honest with customers in case of any mistake. New front line staff prefer to refer to their managers instead of loosing money especially if it was not their own mistake. It is understandable since they have not gained confidence and experience as yet.

Some older front line staff still prefer to refer back to their managers before making any difficult decision. However, they consider themselves still have a lot of power as in all cases the individual who creates the solution at the first place then approval must be obtained from the manager.

> *I generally wouldn't. I generally....if something required a decision I probably ask Scott. Haven't said that… I am sure if I want to I can make a decision on spot for something but I would rather ask somebody to make sure rather than go over of somebody (front line 8).*

One of the informants sees power in the company's support. Every front line staff member knows that he/she will find support and help with any problem. If it is not the employee's fault then the company is totally on the employee's side. This helps to gain more employee commitment and loyalty as the company respect, support and back them up.

6.4 Customer satisfaction

Satisfied employees make for satisfied customers and satisfied customers can, in turn, reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their job (Zeithaml et al, 2006, p.356).The majority of informants believe that their customers are satisfied. They abstracted two key factors to verify that satisfaction; firstly, the percentage of repeat clients that they have.

> *I've only been for 4 month and I have already had a quite few repeat customer but people that have been a long longer than me got customers that have been coming back to them for years so people know(front line 10).*

Secondly, the personal relationships that they have with their customers which allows them to receive feedback from their customers.

> *They come back repeatedly and most of the time if you're doing your job right you know they should be booking all of their holiday through you or at least asking advise through you about all of their holidays. they come back repeatedly and most of the time if you're doing your job right you know they should be booking all of their holiday through you or at least asking advise through you about all of their holidays. so you do build up a relationship mean there is clients I booked them the first day at Fun Travel I still book and who you know have saved me in their speed dial on their phone and that's what you are ultimately aiming to do(front line 4).*

The next section will address the effect, on employee satisfaction, of customer satisfaction and positive feedback.

6.5 Employee satisfaction

An examination of the reasons for feelings of satisfaction among front line employees reveals the reasons as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Reasons for employee satisfaction

Reasons of satisfaction	Dimensions	Illustrative example(s)
Concerning Serving customers	Make customers happy Positive customers' feedback. Building relations with customers.	*I have got one client who was having an absolutely fantastic time and I heard from his parents and they were really happy and that's so great because they just pleased with what we are doing and having a great time so that's ya great satisfaction and also being in environment where everyone is driven and we are making money for the business that's really exciting(front line 1)* *.* *when a clients really had a great time like whether they had a fantastic honeymoon or just being really happy with your service and they may be send you a card, a postcard or. I had a passenger who had send me a bottle of Champaign as a thank you and that's always a total bounces so that's could be one of the best parts (front line 4).* *It has been a really nice customer who has been really friendly and I have been able to take more time with them. I have got a good rapport going with them; I am able to chat with them about their destination and their plans (front line 11).*
Concerning the company itself	Good work atmosphere (family and friendly type). Stable, supportive and transparency management style (give security feeling). Well rewarded. Experience and knowledge (being well prepared and well developed by the company). Brightness of the future (quick progression). Valued by the company. Lots of financial and	*I believe I am going to be…I can get a job anywhere in the world as a travel agent now because I have worked for Fun Travel but it is...ya it is an attractive company to work for. You can....you can ride in this company quite quickly and you can have...if you are prepared to work hard and you get some good clients then ya you can earn some good money so (front line 2).* *I get a good pay, good hours, good holidays so…good friends (front line 3).* *I feel like I have people who look out for me and help me out if any issue should arise. I feel I am well informed about what the company is doing and what things are available to me so that's all very good (front line7).*

	social benefits.	*Well this is the biggest company I've worked for so there is stability as we've been talking about; there are a lot of people we can go to for help. It means they're treated off for example with the things I've been talking about, the other thing was we all....in this year I went to Belgium for the weekend, last year we went to Ireland for the weekend so things like that I've not had that sort...that sort of luxury(front line 6).*
		It makes me feel more secure in my job because I know what is happening and I know that there is not..... There is not things going on in the background that could affect me that I am not been told about. when I left my last job I was looking for a job that was more personal rather than just being thought as just another person here, I was looking for a job where I can come in and be part of a team and be part of like an actual community so just big care which I do feel now and I really appreciate that (front line 10).

Employee satisfaction (often referred to as job satisfaction) has been defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300 in Rust et al, 1996). Employees who are satisfied have higher intentions of staying with their organisation, which results in decreased staff turnover.

From Table 6.4, it can be seen that the employees feel satisfied either as a result of their success in their role with customers or because of the work environment and the company work system. Concerning their job role, it seems that satisfying customers' needs gives employees a sense of success in their role and pleasure with their function. On the other hand, some of the company's internal fundamentals support their satisfaction towards their company and work environment. Initially, the general sociable atmosphere where there appear to be few grudges, good harmony within teamwork and social events maintain this kind of atmosphere. The managerial philosophy is another fundamental for employees' satisfaction. Informants appreciate the flat, open, supportive and transparent kind of management which gives them a secure feeling towards the workplace. In addition, employee involvement in business

with opinions and discussions makes it a relaxed, open and dynamic environment within which they want to do their best. They feel they are esteemed by the company. One of the most crucial reasons for satisfaction is the perceived fairness of the reward system. Uncapped earning is another fulfilment motive. The commission system gives employees a sense of being partners in the business.

Informants appreciate the company's effort towards developing them and enhancing their qualifications. They pride themselves in being part of 'the best in the industry' and that they can work anywhere because they have worked for Fun Travel. Although this is not the only reason for a willingness to continue with the company, the health and financial scheme of the company towards their employees adds to employee feelings towards the company. They feel looked after in all aspects, not only work wise.

6.6 Reasons for employee dissatisfaction

In contrast Table 6.5 displays factors that negatively affect employees' satisfaction level. Concerning customers, this can be in the form of negative feedback from customers due to any error relating to a trip. Informants are confident that most of the time this is not their fault. It could be problem with supplier (hotels, airlines). Even then they try to sort this out to satisfy the customer. Informants stated their willingness to go further in serving customers. However rudeness from customer does not help them do that. Some customers are not friendly and even refuse any kind of engagement or suggestions. Their only concern appears only to relate to price. Other reasons for dissatisfaction seem to relate to the special nature of the company through working on a commission basis. A majority of informants explained how hard it is to be responsible for generating revenue for themselves and for the company. In addition, how frustrating is it to be afraid of making mistakes which may lose you both customers and money.

 The following Table 6.5 summarizes the reasons for dissatisfaction from the employee perspective.

Table 6.5 Reasons for employee dissatisfaction

Reasons of dissatisfaction	Dimensions	Illustrative example(s)
Concerning customers	Unhappy customers (negative feedback) Rude or unserious types of customers.	*The bad parts are that you get people who are coming who waste your time because they don't want to book anything. They just want a friend and want to chat and want to.... and you get people obviously who are very price conscious and you know that they not gonna book because they don't want an expensive price which is how much actually Airlines charge. So to say that probably the only bad part is that a lot of people come in and have no intension of booking (front line 13).* *If the customer is not happy or something is going wrong and they are angry then I will go home and I will think about it and I will worry about it (front line 1).*
Concerning the work	Work stress. Challenging (lots of systems, multi tasking). Working long hours and weekends. Pressure due to commission base.	*The bad things is the stress when you make a mistake it costs us money personally comes out of our commission that's really stressful and ya in just the physical environment...it just could be better (front line 1)* *What I don't enjoy about the job...working weekends ahahahahah, rude people I just thought...it's hard to want to help somebody when they're being rude to you so ya I think ya these are probably the parts that I don't...I don't enjoy about the job so but that's why more positives about this job than negatives that's for sure (front line 2.)* *I would say that it's also rather surprising I see possibly the number of things you have to do for one booking and an awful of systems and procedures that you have to go through for each individual one. It's not very simplified. It's....I would say it's rather complicated just for one individual to make one individual holiday put together (front line 12)*

As can be seen within throughout this chapter, Fun Travel's orientation towards its employees as well as their managerial style affects positively the internal environment of the workplace, the development of customer-focus as well as satisfying the front-line staff who play the major role in marketing the business.