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MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES (M.E.A.):  
CASE STUDY OF ORIENTATION, TRAINING AND  
DEVELOPMENT AT M.E.A. AND CUSTOMERS'  
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH M.E.A.

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A RESEARCH TOPIC PRESENTED TO  
BUSINESS SCHOOL AT THE  
LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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BY  
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JUNE 1997

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Case Study of Orientation, Training and Development at  
M.E.A. and Customers' Level of Satisfaction with M.E.A.

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This project is dedicated to:

My parents, Badih and Amal El-Murr,

My husband, Emile Tabet,

My sister, Carmen El-Murr, and

My mother-in-law, Samira Tabet.

Each one of you played a major role in assisting me complete the project. Apt words can not be found to express my gratitude.

Thank You.

---

### Acknowledgements

I truly appreciate Dr. Hussein Hejase's and Dr. Tarek Mikdashi's efforts in guiding me through this project. Your continuous interest in the project encouraged me to strive for more information.

Special thanks are forwarded to Mr. Khattar Hadathi, General Manager of Public Relations at M.E.A., and Dr. Abdo Bardawil, Vice President of Training and Development at M.E.A.

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**The four Ps of services  
marketing: People, People,  
People, and People.<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Kotler. Marketing Management. (United Kingdom, Prentice Hall International. 1991) 453.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 An Overview

Lebanon portrays itself as a service country, but where does it stand on the quality of service? Over the past two years, I have realized that some service companies, such as banks, hotels, travel agencies, catering companies, public services and so forth, are not concerned with what the customer needs, wants, and suggests. If these companies are not concerned with what the customer needs, wants, and suggests, then Lebanon does not have much to offer on the quality of its services.

In managing a service company, certain steps should be taken in order to succeed. These steps are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 The Service Management Cycle<sup>1</sup>

1. Develop overall mission statement.
2. Develop a service strategy, including service standards.
3. Educate the organization personnel.
4. Manage service to include measuring and monitoring of performance standards.
5. Solve problems and reinforce excellence.

In developing a mission statement, management needs to know and understand the customer. Having developed a mission statement, there should be clear service strategy. Part of developing a service strategy is developing a performance standard. For example, customer complaints should be dealt with

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<sup>1</sup>Karen Eich Drummond, Human Resource Management for the Hospitality Industry. (New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990) Taken from Figure 16-2 from page 293

immediately and management should be notified of the complaint. The third step is to educate the employees towards satisfying customer needs. The next step is to evaluate whether the company has achieved its performance standard. If it has been reached, it should appraise and recognize good performance. If it has not achieved its performance standards, it should solve the problem(s) that hindered reaching the set standards.

## **1.2 Purposes of the Research**

In my research, I am interested in step three mentioned above, which is to educate personnel. The purposes of my research are:

1. To assess the orientation, training and development of employees at Middle East Airlines (M.E.A.),
  2. To assess Middle East Airlines' employees perception of customers.
  3. To assess Middle East Airlines' employees opinion about the current orientation, training, and development program at M.E.A.
- 
4. To assess customers' level of satisfaction with Middle East Airlines.

## **1.3 Limitations of the Study**

Upon discussing the purposes of this research with representatives of the Training and Development department at M.E.A., the following constraints resulted:

1. I was not given the opportunity of conducting more than one interview with more than one person
2. I was not permitted to conduct a survey of the employees.

Due to these limitations, the second and third purposes of this research were not achieved.

Since Middle East Airlines (M.E.A.) is a service company, there is a need to define service and customers. In addition, characteristics of successful service companies and commitment to quality will be discussed.

#### **1.4 What is a Service?**

According to Philip Kotler:

A service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, services can be split into two dimensions: tangible and intangible.<sup>3</sup>

Examples of tangible goods are the meals, drinks, the seats (first class, business class, economy class), and so forth. Eventhough these services are considered tangible, the customer is left with nothing tangible. This is why in the definition above a service is stated to be essentially intangible. Some of the intangible dimensions of a service are reliability, assurance, accuracy, responsiveness, and empathy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Philip Kotler. Marketing Management (United Kingdom, Prentice Hall International. 1991) 455

<sup>3</sup> Drummond 288

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The airline business is considered to be "a major service with accompanying minor goods and services."<sup>5</sup> To illustrate Middle East Airlines sells transportation service, which is a major service, and the food, drinks, magazines, and ticket are some of the minor goods received on board.

## 1.5 Know Thy Customer

Robert J. Martin and Donald Lundberg define a guest as:

"-A person who deserves the most courteous, concerned and attentive treatment that can be provided.

-Someone to respond to quickly, effectively and with sensitivity."<sup>6</sup>

Guest relations involve developing interpersonal skills. One needs to understand people through not only verbal communication but also nonverbal communication. One needs to be very patient and attentive. Self-confidence and pride in what one is doing is of major importance for continuation. One needs to have the ability of recognizing and solving problems according to company's procedures. Lastly, one needs to have a pleasant attitude with customers and fellow employees.

Working in a service industry is not an easy task. Employees are under enormous tension. This is one of the reasons why they should not be over worked.

Customers are continuously evaluating service companies. Knowing what the customers want and expect helps in improving the quality of service offered.

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<sup>5</sup> Kotler 455

<sup>6</sup> Robert J. Martin and Donald Lundberg, Human Relations for the Hospitality Industry. (New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991)



"Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry developed a list of major determinants of service quality. They found that consumers use basically similar criteria regardless of the type of service. The criteria follow:

1. *Access.* The service is easy to obtain in convenient locations at convenient times with little waiting.
2. *Communication.* The service is described accurately in the consumer's language.
3. *Competitiveness.* The employees possess the required skill and knowledge.
4. *Courtesy.* The employees are friendly, respectful and considerable.
5. *Credibility.* The company and employees are trustworthy and have the customer's best interest at heart.
6. *Reliability.* The service is performed with consistency and accuracy.
7. *Responsiveness.* The employees respond quickly and creatively to customers' requests and problems.
8. *Security.* The service is free from danger, risk or doubt.
9. *Tangible.* The service tangibles correctly project the service quality.
10. *Understanding/Knowing the Customer.* The employees make an effort to understand the customer's needs and provide individual attention.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.6 Characteristics of Successful Service Organizations.

We have many examples of successful service companies. One of which is McDonald's which has a built in philosophy of quality, service, cleanliness, and good value.<sup>8</sup> Drummond states the characteristics that differentiate successful service organizations from unsuccessful ones.

First, management should develop, support and implement a policy statement for providing excellent customer service. Second, to implement this policy, the company needs to have a culture striving for this policy. If there is not teamwork, cooperation, optimism, and loyalty implementation will fail. Thus, third, management needs to take the necessary steps for implementation, which includes the appropriate authority. Fourth of all, the systems designed for providing the service should be altered to suit the customer not the operator. Fifth of all,

<sup>7</sup> Kotler 464,465

<sup>8</sup> Drummond 289

frontline service employees should have the flexibility to satisfy customers and they should be customer oriented. Lastly, management needs to provide a healthy working environment in which employees are respected, involved, and rewarded for providing quality service.<sup>9</sup>

As J. Willard Marriott, Jr. states to Marriott corporation managers:

"Take care of your employees and they'll take care of your customers."<sup>10</sup>

## 1.7 Commitment to Quality

Commitment to quality relies on three components: interdepartmental cooperation, teamwork, and management-by-wandering around.<sup>11</sup> Interdepartmental cooperation depends on continuous communication, written and oral, among departments. Managers and employees should know how each department functions, what their goals are and the importance of their existence. Through this way, other departments would be able to view each other as a whole and have mutual respect. Working in teams towards a goal generates a sense of belonging. Here, if interdepartmental cooperation has been properly achieved, then creating teams would not be difficult. Team members need to work together towards the same goal. They should not work against each other and visualize themselves as individuals instead of a team. According to D. Keith Denton,<sup>12</sup>

Management-by-wandering-around (MBWA) enhances productivity, cooperation and teamwork.... To be effective at MBWA you must have strong communication skills. An MBWA manager must be a good

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<sup>9</sup> Drummond 289

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 290

<sup>11</sup> D. Keith Denton, *The Service Trainer™ Handbook: Managing Service Business in the 1990's*. (Singapore, McGraw-Hill Inc. 1992) 71

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

listener, be able to coach and follow through on suggestions by subordinates. Most importantly, from a communication standpoint, MBWA requires that you ask really good questions. Questions like, "What can I do to help you?" or "How do you feel about it?" or "What can we do to make this better?"

There are numerous reasons why some service companies fail to improve the quality of their service. Some of these reasons are as follows:

1. Even though management might claim that they do understand how to improve the quality of their services, in reality they do not understand.
2. Employees are insufficiently trained
3. Productivity and quality measurement system is inadequate.
4. Management is interested in short-term financial gains.<sup>13</sup>

### **1.8 Need of the Study**

Since Lebanon portrays itself as a service company, there is a need to improve the quality of services offered. The objective of service companies should be to deliver at least 95 percent quality service. According to D. Keith Denton,

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"Today, there are world-class organizations like Motorola which have gone well past this high standard through a program called Six Sigma. Six Sigma is a statistical term that essentially means Motorola wants to achieve a quality level of incurring only 3.4 defects per million opportunities. This means their goal is 99.990997 percent perfect product or service."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Denton 5

<sup>14</sup> Ibid 4

Middle East Airlines is among service companies that need to improve the quality of its services. One way of improving its services are to orient, train, and develop their employees towards increasing the level of customer satisfactions.

### **1.9 Construction of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic, the purpose and limitation of the study, and the need of the study. Chapter two provides the literature review, which is collected from secondary data. Chapter three describes the methodology used in the research to collect primary data. Chapter four provides the results of the interview and the customer questionnaire. Lastly, chapter five provides the conclusion of the research: a summary, and recommendation.

The next chapter presents the literature review about orientation, training and development.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

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### 21. Orientation: An Overview

Orientation is a process of introducing a new employee to the organization and to his or her department. A new employee could be an employee that has been recently recruited or transferred to another location. Most companies consider orientation to be part of the recruitment and selection process. I personally believe that a small part of orientation is covered during this process. The larger part of orientation is covered after the employee joins the company. Usually, before the employee is recruited, he/she is informed about his/her salary/wage, benefits, working hours, leaves, duties and responsibilities, and so on. This information is needed by the employee in order to decide whether he/she would accept the job offer. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient for the employee to perform on the job.

Orientation should be done on the first day; additional sessions are required when there is many issues to be covered. Some of the major issues to be covered during orientation are as follows:

- organizational culture
- organizational philosophy
- organizational history
- organizations short-term objectives
- organizations long-term objectives
- department's goals

- employee's role within the organization
- promotional ladder
- tour of the organization.

Meanwhile, the employee needs to be introduced to his/her coworkers and supervisor(s), not only by name but also by position.

### 2.1.1. The Orientation Schedule

The human resource department and the employee's supervisor need to work together on developing an orientation schedule. An example of such a schedule is provided in Figure 2.1. At the end of the orientation, an orientation checklist should be handed to the employee. An example of the orientation checklist is shown in Figure 2.2. The checklist functions as a documentation of the topics covered during orientation since both parties; the employee and the organization, sign it

From here on, the employee should be ready for training and development. In conclusion, to emphasize the importance of orientation:

The failure to properly introduce a new employee to his work situation and company policies can turn a worker with high ambition into a routine haphazard worker with low morale. When a new employee is thrown in with a group of fellow workers to learn by trail and error, it can cause embarrassment and be discouraging to him. A planned orientation program has the advantages of:

1. Making prudent use of company time.
2. Proper employee induction into the company.
3. Logical and natural approach to orienting a new employee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph J. Famularo eds. Handbook of Modern Personnel Administration. (New York: McGraw Hill 1972) 23-2

FIGURE 2.1 ORIENTAION SCHEDULE<sup>2</sup>

New Employee	Name, degree, institution graduated from.
Job Title	XXXXXXXX
Department	XXXXXXXX
8:00 AM	Report to Human Resource Department to be informed about today's schedule. Receive orientation package
8:10-8:30 AM	Tour to Company XYZ.
8:30-9:00 AM	Welcome by company president or branch manager; inform the employee about issues related to Company XYZ.
9:00-9:10 AM	Welcome by department supervisor and introduce to coworkers.
9:10-11:00 AM	Supervisor explains department's location on the organizational chart, function, goals, duties and responsibilities, job expectations, and importance of team spirit.
11:00-12:00 AM	HR department reviews performance appraisal and promotional ladder.
12:00-1:00 AM	Lunch break
1:00-3:00 AM	HR department reviews procedures and policies of other important issues such as compensation, benefits, and his/her training and development program.
3:00-4:00 AM	Employee is shown to his/her office where he can familiarize him/herself to the new atmosphere.

<sup>2</sup> David De Cenzo and Stephen P. Robbins, Human Resource Management (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1996) Adapted from figure 8-2: 221

FIGURE 2.2 ORIENTATION CHECKLIST<sup>3</sup>

Employee Name:	Job Title:	Date Hired:
<u>A. Issues Related to Company XYZ</u>		
<p>—1. Welcome to Company XYZ: Give tour of XYZ and introduce to other employees. Provide map if necessary.</p> <p>—2. Explain Company XYZ' s: History, philosophy, culture, short-term objectives, and long-term objectives</p>		
<u>B. Issues Related to Department ABC.</u>		
<p>—1. Welcome to Department ABC: Tour the department and introduce to coworkers.</p> <p>—2. Explain Department ABC's: location in the organizational chart, function, and goals. PROVIDE AND REVIEW THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.</p> <p>—3. Explain Employee's: duties, responsibilities, and job expectation. PROVIDE AND REVIEW JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB SPECIFICATION.</p> <p>—4. Explain the importance of maintaining the team spirit in the department.</p>		
<u>C. Issues Related to Human Resource Department</u>		
<p>—1. Explain performance appraisal in Company XYZ. PROVIDE AND REVIEW PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL.</p> <p>—2. Explain promotional ladder in Company XYZ.</p> <p>—3. Explain policies related to the following items and provide forms where necessary: salary, benefits, working hours, overtime, breaks, vacations, sick leaves, safety and hygiene, dress code, and emergency procedures.</p>		
Employees Comments:		
Employee's Signature:		
Date:		
Supervisor's Signature:		
Date:		
Head of Human Resource Department's Signature:		
Date:		

<sup>3</sup>Drummond Taken from figure 3-1: 67



## 2.2. Training

Training is a continuous process of teaching employees to ameliorate their skills, knowledge, attitude, or behavior. "Training is more present-day oriented; its focus is on individuals' current jobs, enhancing those specific skills and abilities to immediately perform their jobs."<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2.1 Objectives and Benefits

The objectives of training are:

1. To introduce new employees to their jobs
2. To teach and show employees how to perform their job to the required standards
3. To continuously provide recent information about certain improvements related to their jobs, and to the organization as a whole.

If these objectives were optimized, the employees, managers, organization and customers would benefit. First, employees would be confident of their capabilities and proud of themselves for doing the right thing the first time. Second, managers would have more time to spend on planning and organizing. Thus, one can realize that both employees and managers are performing their jobs more effectively and efficiently. Third, training benefits the organization by increasing productivity and decreasing unnecessary costs. Lastly, customers are retained since

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<sup>4</sup>De Cenzo and Robbins 237

employees are trained to serve them well.

### 2.2.2 Examples of Companies That Benefited From Training

Thomas J. Ryan, President of Motor Technology Inc., which repairs electric motors, acknowledges the benefits of training. The article "Helping Employees Hone Their Skills" states:

As the industry consolidated, the company's commitment to training helped it survive, allowing it to offer the service and quality that the company found were in demands. The company's revenues last year reached \$ 8.9 million.... Employee training is seen as a prerequisite to delivering excellent customer service. Continuing – education programs help reduce turnover and foster a pride in craftsmanship, says Thomas Ryan.... Ryan offers a few tips for others planning to start a training program: "It's important to know what your goal is. Set down guidelines about the different phases of work that need to be learned. Our workers' raises are based partly on [their] learning what is required; they need to know where they are going and what is being asked of them. We have found that training people is the only way to stay on top of changes in the industry."<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this example, automobile dealers realize the benefits of training their salesmen. As stated in the article "Selling School":

Statistics show that customers keep coming back to the same brand from which they have received favorable treatment... To satisfy customer expectations, training programs by automobile companies train salesmen on buyer psychology, value repeat customers over quick closes and breaking down boundaries between automobile sales, parts and service.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Helping Employees Hone Their Skills" *Nation's Business* July 1995:13

<sup>6</sup> Mark Rehtin "Selling School" *Automotive News*, 13 Sept. 1993: 212

As a last example, American Honda Motor Company Inc. Acura is also applying a training program geared towards training their sales personnel to satisfy their customer's needs.

After introducing what is training, identifying its objectives and benefits, and providing three examples of companies that applied training, we now need to show how a training program is developed.

### 2.2.3 Training Programs Development

Some companies depend on leaving the employee learn without training. Others would simply provide the company's manual to the employee and expect him/her to read it and apply what he/she has learnt. However, using these approaches would not help the employee nor the organization. Time and money is lost; frustration and tension is created. Bittel and Newstrom state that:

The point is that there are four ways to provide training: hit-or-miss, sink-or-swim, trail-and-errors, and structured and systematic. The only dependable way is the last one: structured and systematic. It is based on a careful study of what the job requires in terms of knowledge and skills. Then it involves an orderly period of instruction provided by an individual who is familiar with the job, well versed in training techniques, and aware of the learning process.<sup>7</sup>

There are seven steps in developing a training program, which are:

- A. Conduct a need assessment
- B. Determine learning objectives
- C. Develop the overall training program
- D. Develop individual training lessons
- E. Conduct the training
- F. Evaluate

<sup>7</sup> Lister R. Bittel and John W. Newstrom, What Every Supervisor Should Know (New York: McGraw Hill International, 1990): 218

## G. Follow-up.<sup>8</sup>

Each of these steps will be discussed in detail in this section.

### A. Conduct a needs assessment

The difference between the expected performance and the actual performance indicates the need for training. Two methods are used for assessing training need: formal and informal. The formal method is done through questionnaires, interviews, surveys, tests and observations. This method is more structured towards determining whether training is needed or not, what type is needed, and who needs it. However, the informal method relies on indicators such as low productivity, high costs, high accident rates, dissatisfied guests and/or employees, and so forth. Using this method alone in determining training needs is not reliable. The above mentioned symptoms indicate other problems such as low morale due to poor working conditions or improper selection of employees. Thus, it is best to apply both methods, formal and informal to assess training needs.

### B. Determine learning objective

At this stage, the manager reviews what is anticipated to be achieved from the training program. Thus, the general objectives should be identified, indicating the purpose of the program. Then, realistic, attainable and understandable performance-based objectives are set. Through determining the learning objectives, evaluation becomes easier.

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<sup>8</sup> Drummond 68

### C. Determine the overall training program

Here, the subject matter, when, where, who, how much time, and costs are determined. As for the subject matter, keeping a skills inventory for every position helps in identifying what training the employee needs, and where he/she stands.

What is required for skill inventory?

1. To know what skills each employee has
2. To know skills are not required
3. To schedule ahead of time, with deadlines, what training is required for each employee.

An example of a Skill Inventory is provided in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Skill Inventory<sup>9</sup>

Name of Employee	Position Title	Welcomes Guests	Arranges Reservations	Handles Customer Complaints	Answers Telephones	Waits on Queues
<i>Reema</i>	<b>Receptionist</b>	1/8/97	V	NR	V	NR
<i>Madeleine</i>	<b>Receptionist</b>	V	1/8/97	NR	V	NR
<i>Carmen</i>	<b>Front Desk Manager</b>	V	NR	15/7/97	V	NR
<i>Hala</i>	<b>Waitress</b>	V	NR	NR	V	1/8/97
<b>Key</b>						
		V	Skill required and available			
		NR	Skill not required			
		DD/MM/YY	Completion date set by the supervisor for training the employee.			

<sup>9</sup> Bittel and Newstrom 220

Thus, the skill inventory helps in determining what needs to be taught, who, and the deadline.

The training sessions should not last more than forty-five minutes and should be at the convenience of employees. Location is also important, in the sense that it should be in an area appropriate for the teaching purposes. Lastly, training costs are high, ranging from \$350 to \$1,400 per employee trained.<sup>10</sup> In other words, training is not the solution for every existing problem. So, "managers must compare the value received from the increase in performance that can be attributed to training with the costs incurred in the training."<sup>11</sup>

#### **D. Develop individual training lessons.**

There is not a best training method for everyone to rely on. There are certain trade-offs the human resource department needs to consider for selecting a suitable method. These trade-offs are as follows:

- 
- Cost effectiveness
  - Desired program content
  - Appropriateness of the facilities
  - Trainee preferences and capabilities
  - Trainer's preferences and capabilities

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<sup>10</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins 242

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 242

- Learning principles.<sup>12</sup>

Table 2.1 lists some of the training methods available in relation to the learning principles such as the level of participation, repetition, relevance, transference, and feedback.

Table 2.1 Learning Principles in Different Training and Development Techniques<sup>13</sup>

	Participation	Repetition	Relevance	Transference	Feedback
<b>On-the-Job Training</b>					
Job Instruction Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Job Rotation	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes	No
Apprenticeships	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Coaching	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
<b>Off-the-Job Techniques</b>					
Lecture	No	No	No	Sometimes	No
Video Presentation	No	No	No	Yes	No
Vestibule Training	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes
Role Playing	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes	No	Sometimes
Case Study	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Simulation	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Self-Study	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Sometimes	No
Programmed Learning	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Laboratory Training	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	No	Yes

<sup>12</sup> William B. Werther, Jr. and Keith Davis. Human Resources and Personnel Management. New York, McGraw Hill, Inc. 1993. 315

<sup>13</sup> Werther, and Davis. Adapted from Figure 10-5 Learning Principles in Different Training and Development Techniques.316

Training methods may be applied on-the-job or off-the-job. The only difference is the location. On-the-job training occurs at the work place, whereas off-the-job training occurs away from the work place. The idea behind on-the-job training is learning under the supervision of another worker or the manager him/herself. According to the "Training and Development Handbook":

Few, if any, companies admit that they do not use on-the-job training. Yet, in many companies job training means that there is no formalized program and employees are left to learn their jobs in whatever way they can: working along with a helpful fellow employee, applying what they have learned elsewhere to the new job situation, or modifying or improving their performance through negative feedback. This is true in large organizations as well as in small ones.<sup>14</sup>

For best results, whether on-the-job or off-the-job, as stated before training should be planned in a systematic and structured manner. This type of training is referred to as job instruction training. Job instruction training consists of four basic steps:

1. preparing the trainees by telling them about the job and overcoming their uncertainties
2. presenting the instruction, giving essential information in a clear manner
3. having the trainees try out the job to demonstrate their understanding
4. placing the workers into the job, on their own, with a designated resource person to call upon should they need assistance.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins 243

<sup>15</sup> Robert L. Graig eds. Training and Development Handbook. New York: McGraw Hill 1987: 364



Descriptions of some of the training methods used are as follows:

### 1. Sitting by Nellie (Demonstration)

The trainee sits by the trainer, an experienced member of staff, who demonstrates to the trainee how certain tasks are done. The advantage in this method is that the trainee learns directly as he/she observes what is being demonstrated. However, the disadvantage is that the trainer needs to have characteristics of a good teacher, such as the ability to explain things clearly.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the trainer needs to have acquired good working habits, fully understands the process of his/her work and applies the policies and procedures set by the organization. Thus for this method to be successful the selected trainer needs to be a role model and the process of training has to be properly controlled.<sup>17</sup>

### 2. Classroom Lectures

Lectures have a set time. The material to be covered should well organized.

The teacher needs to know how to teach, to have full knowledge of what he/she is teaching, and to have the ability of sustaining the student's attention during the set time. However, participation, feedback, transference, and repetition are often low.<sup>18</sup> Thus, if discussions were allowed student's

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<sup>16</sup> Eugene Mckenna and Nic Beech, The Essence of Human Resource Management (United Kingdom, Prentice Hall International, 1995) 166.

<sup>17</sup> Barry Cushway, John Kind et al., eds. Human Resource Management. Published in association with AMED. 106

<sup>18</sup> Werther, and Davis 318

participation would increase.

### 3. Video and Films

Through audiovisual media, certain learning objectives can be accomplished.

According to Karen Eich Drummond, video and films are useful under certain conditions :

They are useful in demonstrating behavior and dialogue as well as content that is hard to explain verbally.... They are not useful when the material is very technical or thorough or if it is not appropriate for the employees' educational level and previous experience.<sup>19</sup>

An example of a company that applied video training is Federal Express Corporation.

A pay-for-performance program for customer-contact employees that's linked to video training and testing helps Federal Express maintain a competitive advantage.

This Federal Express program won the company PERSONNEL JOURNAL's Optima Award for Competitive Advantage in 1992.<sup>20</sup>

### 4. Vestibule Training

The idea behind vestibule training is to train the employee in a set up similar to that at work so that the training does not disturb the working atmosphere.

This arrangement allows transference, repetition, and participation.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Drummond, 74

<sup>20</sup> William Wilson, "Video Training and Testing Supports Customer Service Goal" Personnel Journal, June 1994. 48

<sup>21</sup> Werther, and Davis. 319.

## 5. Role Playing

Role-playing is a type of training of training where the trainees play different roles. It helps at improving attitudes of certain employees. Usually a certain problem or situation is acted out, which is followed by discussion and analysis. Role-playing requires a skillful trainer since not everyone accepts to participate.<sup>22</sup>

## 6. Simulation

Simulation exercises have features similar to a real life situation at the workplace. There are two types of simulation exercises: a mechanical simulation and computer simulation. Mechanical simulation is similar to vestibule training but the difference is that it provides feedback. As for computer simulations, the trainer practices decision-making skills. It could be in the form of games and virtual reality.<sup>23</sup>

## 7. Computer based training:

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Training on actual equipment used on the job, but conducted away from the actual work setting a simulated work situation.

## 8. Programmed instruction

Condensing training materials into highly organized logical sequences.

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<sup>22</sup>Drummond, 73

<sup>23</sup>Werther, and Davis 321.

May include computer tutorials, interactive video disks, or virtual reality simulations.<sup>24</sup>

## 9. Case Studies

Case studies are short histories or discrepancies often based on real events, which are used to help in the diagnosis and solution of problem. They can be used to teach trainees the appropriate questions to ask and the factors that need to be taken into account.<sup>25</sup>

## 10. Laboratory Training

Laboratory training allows the trainees to discuss and have their experiences with other group members. It develops interpersonal skills.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to these methods, there is the apprenticeship training, which focuses on certain skills. It takes from two to five years; and it can be either on-the-job, or off-the-job in a school.

The above mentioned methods and many other methods, are not solely devoted to training, but can also be used for development of employees. This will be discussed in the development section.

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<sup>24</sup>De Cenzo and Robbins.244

<sup>25</sup> Cushway, 109

<sup>26</sup> Werther, and Davis. 322.

## E. Conduct the training

The human resource department develops training programs. However, the employee's supervisor has a role in training. Since any department's strength can be measured by the competence of its employees, the supervisor should continuously supervise the training process. The training programs should be developed to meet the needs of employees, department, and organization. Thus, both the human resource department and the head of the department need to work together to develop a successful training program.

Being a good trainer requires a variety of characteristics; the person should be

- knowledgeable
- enthusiastic and interested
- funny
- clear and concise
- responsive to employees
- sincerely caring in attitude toward employees
- patient
- a good role model
- organized
- able to put employees at ease
- good at asking and answering employees
- good in classroom management skills
- good in reinforcement skills <sup>27</sup>

For evaluating the employee during the session, a training record should be kept. As for evaluating the training session, the subject matter, training methods, trainer's name, trainees' names, date and time should be documented.

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<sup>27</sup> Drummond 74

## F. Evaluating

Evaluating the training program is difficult especially since one is measuring through intangible outcomes, such as better customer relations.<sup>28</sup> However, it is a step of major importance. Through evaluation, one tries to determine if the objectives set at the beginning were achieved. As Skuli Gudmundson stated:

In assessing whether training program works, training managers should examine the original purpose, determine the desired outcome, evaluate the training method used and measure the result of the training.<sup>29</sup>

There are various ways to evaluate the program, such as observation, questionnaires, tests and surveys. Donald L. Kirkpatrick developed a model for assessing training programs in 1959. It consists of four levels:-

Level 1: Student "smile sheets." At this stage, the company asks trainees for their reaction to the training program. Their comments in a post-training survey can provide some basic information on the program's effectiveness, such as whether the type of training provided was appropriate for the task. However, smile sheets do not evaluate the transfer of knowledge.

Level 2: Pre-and post training testing. Prior to training, test the students to establish a baseline of knowledge. The best approach is to give them a written test on the morning of the training session. Based on these scores, the trainer can adapt the session to employees' current level of understanding and beyond.

At the end of the training program, retest employees to gauge what they learned....

Level 3: Behavioral changes on the job. Smile sheets and written tests provide some level of measurement, but if the students do not apply their new knowledge on the job, then the training wasted everyone's time.

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<sup>28</sup> Cushway 114

<sup>29</sup> Skuli Gudmundson, "Does Your Safety Training Work?" *HR Focus*, Sept. 1996. 9

Your method of monitoring on-the-job performance does not have to be complicated, but it should be consistent....

Level 4: Business results. Ultimately, senior managers expect.... training to have a positive impact on the bottom line.... most experts agree that if Level 3 was achieved, Level 4 will follow<sup>30</sup>

Kirkpatrick model has been refined to serve the demands of today's human resource department. Now a day, there are different approaches used to evaluate the training programs. The following approaches are used after training and these issues are of interest to the human resource department.

1. Reaction: Did the employees like the program?
2. Knowledge: Did the employees learn the information taught?
3. Behavior: Are the employees using the new skills or behavior on the job?
4. Attitudes: Do the employees demonstrate any new attitude?
5. Productivity: Did the training increase productivity and was it cost effective?<sup>31</sup>

There are three performance-based evaluation measures most widely used:

1. Post-Training Performance Method: evaluating training programs based on how well employees can perform their jobs after they have received the training
2. Pre-Post-Training Performance Method: Evaluating training programs based on the difference in performance before and after one receives training<sup>32</sup>
3. Pre-Post-Training Performance with Control Group Method: Evaluating training by comparing pre-and-post-training results with individuals who did not receive the training.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Skuli, Gudmundson 10

<sup>31</sup> Drummond 75

<sup>32</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins 256

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 257

## **G. Follow-up**

This is the step where one checks whether the employees are using what they have been taught. "First, job performance is analyzed. Next, performance is reinforced or corrected face to face."<sup>34</sup> Thus, the follow-up judges the whole training process, whether it was successful or not, and deals with its aftermath.

Having clarified how training programs should be developed, we now need to define development, identify its objectives and provide examples of employee development methods.

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## **23 Development**

### **2.3.1 Definition**

Employee development deals with educating employees towards his/her own personal growth. It is more future-oriented. Unlike training, it does not deal with developing certain motor skills. It deals with developing the employee's knowledge, the ability to understand and analyze. All employees can be developed.

### **2.3.2 Objectives**

Thus, the objectives of development are as follows:

1. Helping employees qualify for future jobs
2. Providing opportunities for personal development.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Drummond 75

<sup>35</sup> Ibid 63



### 2.3.3 Employee Development Methods

Just like training methods, development methods can be either on-the-job or off-the-job. The on-the-job methods are job rotation, assistant-to position, and committee assignment.

- Job rotation increases an employee's knowledge and abilities by moving them to different positions, either horizontal or vertical. Horizontal job rotation is a form of short-term transfer. Vertical job rotation is a form of promotion. "Learner participation and high job transferability are the learning advantage of job rotation."<sup>36</sup>
- Assistant-to position provides an opportunity to develop organizational skills. It involves allowing an employee with potential to work for sometime with a successful manager.
- Committee assignment develops decision-making skills and the ability to work in-groups. A committee assignment could be temporary or permanent. In either case, being involved in committee assignment is rewarding.

The off-the-job employee development methods are lecture courses and seminars, simulations, and outdoor training.

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<sup>36</sup> Werther, and Davis 317

- Lecture courses and seminars are designed to communicate specific interpersonal technical, or problem solving skills
  
- Simulations, which has already been discussed in the training methods, tries to create the real-life situation atmosphere. Through simulations, one is able to live the situation and try to solve the problems created. However, it is impossible to duplicate a real-life situation.
  
- Outdoor training concentrates on developing self-confidence and teamwork. It usually involves both physical and emotional challenges.

### **2.3.4 Two Special Cases of Development**

Mentoring or coaching and counseling are two methods that concentrate on the relationship between an employee and another party, either a coach or a counselor respectively. Both of these methods are used for developing employees.

Coaching is the process of guiding another employee, through advice, criticism or suggestions, towards his/her own personal growth. Coaching is not handled by the human resource department but by the supervisor or manager. This method relies heavily on being a "good" coach; it works best when the individuals do not have any reporting relationship. Its advantage is that it provides the "opportunity for high interaction and rapid feedback on performance."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins 249

Counseling is similar to coaching but the difference is that in counseling the employees are "guided in overcoming performance problems."<sup>38</sup> In counseling employees there are some important steps that have to be followed, which are:

1. Document all problem performance behaviors.
2. Deal with employee objectively, fairly, and equitably.
3. Confront job performance issues only.
4. Offer assistance to help the employee.
5. Expect the employee to resist the feedback and become defensive.
6. Get employee to own up to the problem.
7. Develop an action plan to correct performance.
8. Identify outcomes for failing to correct problems.
9. Monitor and control progress.<sup>39</sup>

## 2.4 Organizational Development

Organizations are facing new challenges in their dynamic environment. They are continuously facing change. The simplest definition of organizational development is a "process in the organization helping employees adapt to change."<sup>40</sup> Four areas are usually affected by change in organization: systems, technology, process, people.<sup>41</sup> If management is not prepared to face these changes, these challenges, then the organization will observe its own downfall. According to Glenn H. Varney:

"The change agent" as referred to in the organization development field, is the person who serves as the catalyst or prime mover of change strategy. The change agent may be an internal consultant, a manager, or an external change agent."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins, 250

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 251

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 252

<sup>41</sup> Ibid; 254

<sup>42</sup> Training Handbook : 539

## 2.4.1 Techniques of Organizational Development

There is a variety of techniques used for organizational development. The choice of which technique to use depends on at what level is the development: individual, teams, intergroup or total organization. Figure 2.4 depicts the uses of Organizational Techniques.

Figure 2.4 Use of Organizational Techniques<sup>43</sup>

Organizational Development Techniques Used For:			
Individual	Teams	Intergroup	Total Organization
Life planning Individual needs Training needs	<i>Work Procedures</i> Task accomplishment Decision-making agendas <i>Interpersonal</i> Relations Feelings Attitudes	Mutual understanding Cooperation Reduced disfunctional competition Communications problems	Planning Purpose Objectives Goals Organizational Flexibility Form follows function Communications

Three approaches that rely heavily on group interactions, participation and collaboration are as follows:<sup>44</sup>

1. **Survey Feedback:** Questionnaires, usually attitude questionnaires, are distributed among employees. The purpose of these questionnaires is to recognize if certain problems exist with the employee's job, co-workers, supervisor and so forth.
2. **Team Building:** Team building increases trust and frankness among employees. People in the organization work together on a project to achieve

<sup>43</sup> Training Handbook: 551

<sup>44</sup> De Cenzo and Robbins 252

the set goals. Responsibilities should be fairly distributed among team members.

3. Third Party Intervention: A third party usually intervenes when conflict arises. The duty of the third party is to reduce or overcome the differences that caused the conflict. In addition, the third party should identify the similarities both parties have.

## 2.5 Conclusion For Training and Development

It is important to realize that companies need to train and develop their employees to deal with the local and international market needs. In the international market, there is a difference in language culture, religion, values, norms, attitude and so forth. If an expatriate is not well trained and developed to face these issues, he/she is surely at a disadvantage and so is the company.

This brings us to the reasons why some generic training programs fail.

According to the article by David Chaudron:

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There are a number of reasons why these generic training programs fail to produce expected results. One is that these are not related to action, which means that development of training does not consider the strategic plan of the organization. Another reason is that training is used as a solution to a particular problem when other training courses that can better solve the problem.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> David Chaudron, "Avoid the Training Hammer." *HR Focus*, July 1995: 12, & 13.

Other reasons why training programs fail are lack of sufficient funding, lack of top management support, lack of motivation, lack of reward system for training and development, lack of planning, and incorrect analysis of training needs.<sup>46</sup>

In my opinion, the main reason behind having dissatisfied customers is due to lack of proper orientation, training and development of employees. Before presenting two examples of companies that had successful programs, I would like to point out few issues to clarify my argument, which are:

- Having the title "Human Resource Department" in the organizational chart is not enough. One needs a functioning Human Resource Department.
- In order to have a functioning Human Resource Department, the company needs to hire and/or train qualified personnel to manage the department.
- Thus, the Human Resource Department needs to be budgeted for fairly.
- Lastly, if top management does not recognize the rewards, they will get from their most valuable assets, human resources, they will start facing high rates of turnover, dissatisfied customers, lower market share, and more losses are still to come.

Therefore, in simplified terms, if service companies start to care for their employees and understand their needs, then gradually the employees will start to care for their customers and understand the customers' needs. Thus, having this, more profit will be generated.

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<sup>46</sup> Drummond 80

Two examples of successes and more profits due to training and development programs are Motorola and Mirage Resorts Inc.

Over the past five years, Motorola has seen annual sales increase by an average of 18 percent, while annual earnings growth has soared at a 26 percent clip. Productivity measures by sales per employee has climbed 139 percent during the same period, even though the company's work force has grown substantially....Training isn't the only reason for Motorola's bottom-line success, but experts contend that the company's emphasis on continuous education is a crucial advantage in today's marketplace ....Motorola's education push began 15 years ago, when Robert Galvin...determined that training would bolster global competitiveness.<sup>47</sup>

As Mirage Resorts in Las Vegas, it believes that its success is due to the recruitment and training strategies it has. But that is not all, it provides its employees attractive benefits. As a result, the employees are motivated towards treating the customer well.

The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology applied for collecting primary data about M.E.A.'s Orientation, Training, and Development, and about customer's level of satisfaction

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<sup>47</sup> Linda Grant "A School For Success, Motorola 's Ambitious Job Training Program Generates Smart Profit" US News & World Report. 22 May, 1995: 54.

## **Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology**

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### **3.1 Basic Approach**

Three approaches were designed to collect information: Interview questions, employee questionnaire, and customer questionnaire. The interview questions were designed to collect information about orientation, training, and development at M.E.A. The employee questionnaire was designed for two purposes. The first purpose was to collect employees' perception of customers. The second purpose was to collect employees' opinion and level of satisfaction with the current orientation, training and development program. Lastly, the customer questionnaire was designed to assess customer's level of satisfaction with M.E.A. A copy of these three approaches is found in appendix A.

### **3.2 Survey Design and Methodology**

#### **3.2.1 Source of Information**

The interview questions were addressed to the Vice President of Training and Development Center at M.E.A., Dr. Abdo Bardawil.

The employees' questionnaire was aimed at any M.E.A. employee who directly deals with customers and has had any form of training and/or development at M.E.A. The required sample was of 150 employees.

The customer questionnaire was designed to be distributed towards people who traveled with M.E.A. during the past year. 150 questionnaires were distributed; 125 were returned. This means 83% of the people answered. The sample consisted of people from various occupations: accountants, administrators, agents, analysts, architects, assistant film directors, clerks, controllers, directors, engineers, executive secretaries, foreman, sales managers, merchants, computer operator, computer programmer, reporters, secretaries, students, teachers, technicians, translators, and housewives. The



programmer, reporters, secretaries, students, teachers, technicians, translators, and housewives. The questionnaires were distributed among companies such as: Dar Al-Handase, Consolidated Contractors Company (projects, Beirut International Airport Project and Sibling Cement Factory Project), Lebanese Broadcasting Company International, Ogero, Lebanese American University and others. Lastly, the sample was of people of different nationalities.

### **3.2.2 Personnel Interview**

The interview questions were prepared to gather information from management's point of view. I was given the opportunity to interview Dr. Abdo Bardawil, Vice President of Training and Development.

The personnel interview was meant to have a clearer picture of orientation, training and development at M.E.A. Part I consist of questions 1-7, which deals with orientation at M.E.A. Part II consists of questions 8-12, which handles the training part. Part III consists of questions 13-22. Questions 13-21 discuss the development of employees. Question 22 inquires about whether the department is sufficiently financed. The last part, Part IV only asks for written information about general things related to M.E.A.

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To balance out management's point of view about training and development, an employee questionnaire was developed. But unfortunately, I was not permitted to conduct a survey of M.E.A. employees.

### **3.2.3 Employee Questionnaire**

Attached to the employee questionnaire is a cover letter from myself addressed to top management, one of which is Dr. Abdo Bardawil. The letter first states my appreciation for having the opportunity of conducting a research on M.E.A. about orientation, training and development. Secondly,

it states the objective of the questionnaire and describes the sample of employees needed. Lastly, it states the deadline for collecting the data.

The questionnaire was meant for any employee who directly deals with customers and who had undergone orientation and any form of training and/or development. The first part deals with demographic information such as date, age, gender, marital status, educational level, occupation, and the length of working period with M.E.A. The second part requires the employee to list the latest form of training he/she had. Part 3 consists of question 1-20, which has statements about customer relations. The employee is required to rate his/her opinion about these statements. Part 4 consists of question 21. It lists the topics that should be covered during orientation. The employee is required to tick off those items that were covered during his/her orientation period. Part 5 consists of questions 22-38. Questions 22-37 handles statements about training and development directed towards total quality management. Question 38 is an open-end question providing an opportunity for employees to state their suggestions for improving training and development.

Questions 1-20, and 22-37 are based on the Likert scale.

### **3.2.4 Customer Questionnaire**

The survey was designed to collect data from people who traveled with M.E.A. during the past year, mainly concentrating on how customers viewed M.E.A. in terms of level of quality service.

The first part of the questionnaire collects demographic information such as: name(optional), age, gender, marital status, nationality and occupation. The second part consists of questions from 1-5. Question 1 and 2 were meant to collect data about frequency of travel and frequency of travel with M.E.A. respectively. Question 3 was intended to collect customer's ratings about M.E.A.'s airfare compared to other airlines. Question 4 requires from the customer to rate certain items in order of

preference in choosing an airline. Question 5 helps in identifying what other airlines the customers travel with. Part 3 consists of question 6-9. These questions indicate the customers' level of satisfaction with M.E.A. Part 4 consists of questions 10-20. Questions 10-19 focus more on customers' level of satisfaction with M.E.A. employees- those who deliver the service. Question 20 is an open-end question for any suggestion for improving the service of M.E.A.

Questions 1-3, and 6-19 were based on the Likert scale. Question 4 was based on ordinal scale, ranking the items from 1: most important, 2: next important, ...8: least important. Questions 5 and 20 are open-ended response questions.

### **3.3 Analysis of Variables**

#### **3.3.1 Customer Questionnaire**

In part I demographic variable are collected to provide background information. Age provides two types of information. The first type indicates the years of experience. The older the person, the more experienced, especially if that person frequently travels. The second type of information, on the other hand, is that younger people are the future. Therefore, their opinion is of importance for the future of M.E.A. Thus, we need to look at all age ranges in the filled out questionnaires. The gender has a role. In our society men travel more especially for business purposes. Marital status states whether a person is single, married, or divorced. Nationality identifies people the citizenship of people who travel with M.E.A.

Questions 1 and 2 provide information about frequency of travel variables. Question 1 rates the frequency of travel by using the likert scale ranging from "weekly" to "less than once a year". Those who travel frequently have had more experiences with airlines compared to those who do not travel

frequently. Question 2 rates the frequency of travel with M.E.A. using the likert scale rating from "all of the time" to "hardly ever".

Questions 3-4, 6-19 judge attitude variables. They give an idea of how customers view and feel towards M.E.A. in different aspects. Question 3 values customers' opinion about the price variable compared to other airlines. Question 4 ranks eight variables in accordance of importance to the customers. These variables are quality of service, airfare pricing, punctuality of take-off, airline safety, cleanliness of airline, point of destination, time of departure, and seating comfort. Questions 6-9 rate four of the above mentioned variables at M.E.A.: airline safety, cleanliness of airline, seating comfort, and quality of service. Again the likert scale was used ranging from "very good" to "not good at all". Questions 10-19 dissect the quality of service variable into characteristics of employees to measure how customers rate M.E.A. employees. The likert scale is used which ranges from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

### **3.3.2 Employee Questionnaire**

Part one also collects demographic information. Age indicates to us three categories of people. The first is young people whose age ranges from 20~35 years. The second is middle aged employees aging form 36~50 years. The last category is employees who are close to retirement, age group 51~65. Gender here does not give much of an indication. Marital status gives an indication of the degree of responsibility a person is holding. Educational level indicated to us background information. The employees' position indicates three levels: in the organizational structure, lower, middle, and top. The length of working period at M.E.A. indicates to us how long of an experience employee X had at M.E.A.

Part two indicates to us the latest form of training the employees had in terms of name of the training session, training methods applied, starting and ending date, and the hours/week. Part three collects employees general attitude towards customers. The likert scale was used ranging from "very true" to "not true at all". Lastly, part four collects employees general attitude towards the training and development at M.E.A. The likert scale was used ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"

### **3.4 . Data Analysis**

The variables in customer questionnaire were entered into the computer package system Microsoft Excel 1997. The frequency distribution, percentage distribution, and standard deviation were derived and tabulated. In addition a descriptive analysis was done for the interview conducted on June 3,1997.

The next chapter illustrates M.E.A. as a case study from management's point of view and customers point of view. Analysis of the primary data will be presented.

### 4.1 MEA's Achievements

Middle East Airlines did not exactly experience the perfect business cycle. It had some misfortunes namely the closing of Intra Bank in 1966 and the Lebanese Civil War from 1975 until 1991. In this section, the achievements of M.E.A. will be divided into three parts. M.E.A. before the civil war, during the civil war and after the civil war.

#### 4.1.1 M.E.A. Before the Civil War

In 1945, Saeb Bey Salam, the General Manager, and Fawzi El-Hoss, the Technical Manager, founded M.E.A. as a partnership with a capital of L.L.1 million. Three months later a technical assistance agreement was signed with British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC). M.E.A. provided it transportation service by 1946 to Aleppo, Cairo, Libya, Baghdad, Istanbul, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Dahrain on the "De Havilland Rapid" aircraft.

Pan American (PAN AM) bought in 1949 36% of M.E.A. and had 3 out of 7 seats on the board of directors; thus M.E.A. became a joint stock company. By 1955, PAN AM sold its shares to Saeb Bey Salam, who became the president and principal shareholder. However, in the same year, BOAC bought 38.74% of the shares and had 4 out of 12 seats on the board of directors.

It took M.E.A. 17 years to be financially independent. By 1962, it was owned by Lebanese. Air Liban joined M.E.A. in 1963 by buying 30% of its shares and 2 seats on the board of directors. At that time, new routes were introduced to West

Africa, Middle East, and Paris. In 1964, M.E.A. held the 16<sup>th</sup> position out of 93 members in IATA. Full integration of M.E.A. and Air Liban took place in 1965.

For long distance routes, three Douglas DC-8-62s were ordered. But in 1966 Intra Bank collapsed, which left M.E.A. out of funds: 65% of the airlines stock and all its working capital were with Intra Bank. Thus, the order was cancelled.

"In 1967 M.E.A. signed a pool agreement with LIA which covered revenue from all routes flown by both airlines and in 1968 B707-320G type were introduced."<sup>1</sup>

In the same year, M.E.A. became the only passenger airline in Lebanon.

By 1963, employees were allowed to buy M.E.A. shares. 5% (50,000 shares) of the total shares was devoted for employees who wanted to be shareholders. Therefore, profits reached L.L. 35,514,000 by 1974. In the same year, M.E.A. earned first place for "Excellence in Service"<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4.1.2 M.E.A. During the Civil War**

In 1975, M.E.A. earned again first place for "Excellence in Service"<sup>3</sup>. However, tension was growing in Lebanon, which led to the civil war. In 1975, most of the Lebanese people thought that the problems would soon be resolved. Was 1991 soon enough? Just as the people were optimistic, M.E.A. was optimistic at first. It forecasted for 1975 a profit of L.L. 35 million. Profits actually "increased to L.L. 50 million and then to 75 million through retaining profit in an effort to strengthen its

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<sup>1</sup> Hilda H. Agoshian. Recommended Future Strategy for The M.E.A. :33.

<sup>2</sup> Naim El-Hage. "The Role and Training of the Flight Attendant". Cedar Wings Issue 34, July-August 1996.118

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

financial structure,"<sup>4</sup> In addition, new routes were introduced to London and the Arabian Gulf on the new Boeing 747.

Unfortunately, again M.E.A. witnessed losses. In 1976, the loss was more than financial: it lost human beings. Namely, two flights had crashed: flight 438 from Beirut to Dubai and Muscat, and a Boeing 720B crashed in Saudi Arabia. According to international investigators, it was not M.E.A.'s fault.

There were more losses to come. In 1976, M.E.A. Boeing 720B was hit by a shell and thus, Beirut International Airport closed for five months. By November of that year, 24 offices in Europe, Africa, and America had closed. Facing such losses, some of M.E.A.'s B747 were leased to Saudi Arabia.

L.L. 87.7million were lost and leasing revenues decreased by 42% in 1981. By 1982, M.E.A. managed to stay operating by a joint venture with Gulf Air and a pooling agreement with Alia. In 1983, flights to New York started.

In 1987, M.E.A.'s board of directors cut 25% of salaries and wages. Since losses reached L.L. 452 million. These losses were the result of the civil war. 1988 was a year of election; it was a year of temporary peace. The number of passengers increased by 25%. That year, a president for the country was never elected. Lebanon was lead by General Michele Aoun. Violence broke out again. Borders between East and West Beirut were closed. This led to three weekly trips in 1990 from BIA to Koleyat Military Airport. 87,000 passengers took this route. MEA was the only operating Airline from Lebanon to other countries where 547,368

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<sup>4</sup> Agoshian. 33



passengers traveled. By 1991, the war ended, and since then, MEA started facing new challenges - the international changes in the aviation industry.

#### 4.1.3 M.E.A. After the Civil War

After the war, many issues were on M.E.A.'s agenda. Some of these issues are ways of generating funds, moving towards privatization or not, changing aircrafts, increasing routes, improving services and so forth.

According to the Chairman of Board and President of M.E.A., Khaled M.Salaam:

We have therefore carried out a number of major innovations in recent weeks. Among these, I would like to single out a new capital injection of 255 million dollars. This will allow us to renew our fleet, upgrade our service and turn many of our high hopes into realities. It will allow us to show our passengers, once again, that M.E.A. is ready and willing for take off towards the twenty first century.<sup>5</sup>

In 1997, four brand new A320s and A321s replaced the Boeing 707. The interior and exterior of the plane was changed to suit customer's comfort. In addition, "modern entertainment systems and the latest in SATCOM telephones"<sup>6</sup> have been installed. As for the exterior, a "new logo and color scheme has been designed...the cedar...adorns the tail and the engines."<sup>7</sup>

Currently M.E.A. provides transportation to the following destinations: Abidjan, Abu Dhabi, Accra, Aden, Amman, Athens, Bahrain, Berlin, Brussels, Bucharest, Cairo, Colombo, Copenhagen, Damascus, Dhahran, Doha, Frankfurt, Geneva,

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<sup>5</sup> Khalad m. Salaam. "M.E.A. Always Ready for Take-Off". *Cedar Wings*. Issue 34, July/August 1996. 1

<sup>6</sup> Mansour Bardawil. "M.E.A.'s Future Plans" *Cedar Wings*. Issue 36, November/December 1996. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Khattar Hadathi. "Once Again-The First" *Cedar Wings*. Issue 37. January/February/March. 1997. 53

Istanbul, Jeddah, Kano, Khartoum, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Lagos, Larnaca, London, Milano, New York, Nice, Paris, Riyadh, Rome, Sao Paulo, Sydney, and Zurich.<sup>8</sup> For the coming year, three additional routes will be added: Canada-Montreal, U.S. and India-Bombay.

Among other changes, M.E.A. entered the Internet. They also established a catering company with Albert Abella and Abu El-Jadayel. Lastly, new training programs will be implemented. This leads us to the next section that will focus on orientation, training and development aimed at increasing customers' satisfaction at M.E.A.

#### **4.2 Management's Point of View on Orientation, Training and Development**

M.E.A. has its own training and development center. Having survived the war, M.E.A. is investing on improving its services. In this section, we will have a look over the following issues:

1. Training and Development Center
2. Orientation, Training and Development
3. Two examples of training at M.E.A.
4. Some of the current training programs.

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<sup>8</sup> Cedar Wings. Issue 37. January/February/March 1997.

#### **4.2.1 Training And Development Center**

The aviation field has many job specialties. There are engineers, pilots, flight attendants, sales people, airport people, reservation people, operators, accountants, managers, secretaries, computer operators, and so forth. The training and development center at M.E.A. is responsible for training and developing people in the diversified field of aviation. It is similar to a university. There is certain amount of credit hours of training required in order to qualify for a job. "For example, there are 5000 employees, 5000 instruction hours/year, and 100,000 man hours/year."<sup>9</sup>

The employee has a record sheet that lists the required courses, seminars, and/or campaigns that are needed for him/her to qualify for the job. These series of courses is structured in terms of time required for completion, topic, and so forth. Some of the courses are simply refreshers, which are available every six months or 10 months.

In either case, whether it is training for a skill, or developing for a career, or organizational development, training and development is a continuous process at M.E.A. Next, we will have a deeper look at the orientation, training and development at M.E.A.

#### **4.2.2 Orientation**

New recruits at M.E.A. undergo one week of orientation. During this week the employee is introduced to the company's history, the culture, organizational structure,

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil. Vice President of Training and Development at M.E.A. June 3, 1997.

and in particular, people are identified by their name, position, and function. Then the employee attends a series of lectures that explains and clarifies the functions of the departments. After the lectures, the employee visits these departments.

The employee is then introduced to his/her rights, duties, responsibilities, and so forth. At the end of orientation, he/she is given the "Staff Regulation Handbook". The topics covered in this handbook are similar to that of the labor law. There is an additional part to this which states the benefits offered at M.E.A.

Having reached this stage, the employee is then passed for selection, if he/she has not been chosen yet. If he/she has been selected, he/she is sent to the department where he/she will be working. After working for two or three weeks at the department, he/she will be sent for training.

Therefore, the employee during orientation is rotated from one department to another. This benefits the company since the employee represents the company; he/she should be well informed about the company as a whole. In addition, the employee will be able to visualize and understand how his/her functions complement other functions of the company. Lastly, it benefits the employee because he/she has a chance of discovering what he/she desires.

M.E.A. tries to satisfy the employees and the company by "mutual marriage". According to Dr. Abdo Bardawil, the employee, especially a university graduate is given the chance to be placed in the department he/she desires to work at. Meanwhile, the departments are required to place in order of preference the

employees. If M.E.A. realizes there is a mutual response, then the employee is sent to that department, where he/she will be trained.

"We try to put them there because obviously any kind of transfer from one department to another is a loss for the company. We would rather have from the beginning a happy marriage."<sup>10</sup>

Simply stated, if M.E.A. does not orient its employees. It misrepresents itself. The employee will be dissatisfied with the type of work he/she is doing. In addition, the work will be impaired; there will be no coordination and cooperation among fellow employees and thus the departments.

#### **4.2.3 Training and Development**

##### **A. Training Levels**

Training occurs at three levels at M.E.A. The first level is to qualify the employee with certain skills for a specific job. The second level prepares a person to reach a position within the coming years. The third level prepares all employees towards a corporate philosophy.

If a person has been hired for reservation, he/she will be sent to the center to take the basic courses. Having completed the basic courses, he/she is sent to his/her department. After six months, he/she is sent back for second set of courses and the same process continues. For each function, there is a path of courses to be fulfilled. This is the first level of training.

The second level of training deals with development of a person. If Mr./Ms. X is observed to have potential for a career, then this person is enrolled into individual

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil. Vice President of Training and Development. June 3, 1997.

developmental courses. These courses prepare the individual for a career in the coming years. An example is a hostess who had gone through her eight weeks of training and then every six months. It is realized that she has potential to become a senior hostess or supervisor of the plane. This is where development comes in.

Lastly, the organizational development is done through campaigns where every M.E.A. employee attends. For example, recently M.E.A. had a campaign about "Service Excellence" and "Total Quality Management".

### **B. Training Needs and Objectives**

The job requirements determine the training needs and objectives. The objective of training is to make the person "capable, proficient, and excellent at doing their job"<sup>11</sup> For example, a person at the airport is required to know how to handle passengers, tickets and load control. Therefore, he/she is trained to fulfill these requirements. There are other courses, which would develop the person. If the person wishes to build him/herself, he/she needs to take these desired courses. Therefore, person who lacks certain skills goes under training. Lastly, there are situations where a person is trained, but still is not able to perform to the required standard. In this case, it could be a matter of communication, human relations or discipline.

### **C. Customer Relations**

Part of the requirements of some of the employees' job is to deal with customers. Part of the training material deals with the nature of human behavior and

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil

relation. Having such a background reduces the probability of not knowing how to handle problems with customers. Naturally, experience plays an additional role. The employees are taught that:

1. "They are dealing with a human being.
2. They are dealing with a moving customer that is changing.
3. They are dealing with a knowledgeable customer. He/she knows what other airlines do, therefore he/she has certain expectation.
4. That the demand of the job requires that they add a competitive edge so that they make a difference.
5. ...The only difference between two airlines is the human being."<sup>12</sup>

In addition, employees are taught how the customer views him/her, and what is expected out of him/her.

1. "The customer expects the employee to feel with him/her.
2. The customer views the employee as the whole organization. Thus, the employee represents M.E.A. Anything he/she says commits M.E.A. and either honors or dishonors the company.
3. The customer expects the employee to be skillful at doing his job.
4. The customer expects his trip to be as comfortable and safe as can be."<sup>13</sup>

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Therefore training goes beyond teaching technical skills. It teaches how to deal with a dynamic customer.

#### **D. Training Methods**

The methods used for training vary, depending on the course and its requirements. Commonly used are classroom lectures, video and film, role-playing,

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

case studies, simulators, and group work. The majority of the training is carried in-house by M.E.A. instructors. Another part is also in-house, but by instructors from abroad and the third part is sending the candidate abroad or outside the company.

Dr. Abdo Bardawil states an example:

"For example, when we buy a new type of aircraft, obviously my instructors have not yet learned. So we send the instructor as well as the core people to learn in Seattle, America or Toulouse, France...and they come back. And now the instructor begins to teach this here."

### **E. Who Conducts the Training?**

The in-house M.E.A. instructors are previously experienced employees. They teach the function that they have had experience in. This is also applicable for managerial topics. The instructor, an experienced manager, takes the theoretical principles of business and applies it to past experiences from cases in the archives.

### **F. Evaluation Of Training Program**

Evaluation of the training program at M.E.A. is not done through the employees but rather through the "impact of such training on the customer.... after all the results speaks louder than anything else."<sup>14</sup> M.E.A. rates the customer level of satisfaction through four ways. It relies on all four to get results.

1. "Questionnaires on the plane: That is fictitious for many reasons. First statistically not so many people answer it.... Second, people are answering under personal experience....The questionnaire on the plane is not enough.
2. Hold interviews/ or seek the opinion of customers after he/she left the plane. It has two disadvantages:  
  
First, most people are in a hurry. Second, psychologically most people are happy to have landed.

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil



3. Interview people who frequently travel with MEA either in their offices or at MEA premises. The questions asked are structured.
4. Interview the employees."<sup>15</sup>

As for the last method, the employees are in contact with the customer. There are various ways to report problems. First, for those employees whose job demands are so great that they can not register problems, a quality controller registers these problems. His/her function is to observe the essence of certain problem and report it. Second, by law, it is a must that the senior of the plane writes a structured report about certain issues such as the equipment on the plane, behavior of the team, the service, the customer and so forth. Third, there are daily briefings from the supervisors to their teams. During this time, the employee has a chance to report any problem. Fourth, through seminars, where all the employees meet, problems could be voiced out. Lastly, customers' written complaints could be handed to the employees.

This concludes management's point of view of the orientation, training, and development program at M.E.A. After this, two examples of training at M.E.A. will be illustrated and the current development programs will be mentioned.

#### **4.2.4 Two Examples of Training at M.E.A.**

According to Mr. Naim El-Hage, Head of the In Flight Service Department:

"Potential flight attendants are given several screening appraisal exercises testing their physical ability, general knowledge, and attitude through both written exams and interviews.

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<sup>15</sup> Dr. Abdo Bardawil

Once the candidate is selected, he/she undergoes an intensive 8 to 10 week program and practical training at our Training and Development Department. That the training covers technical knowledge of the aircraft, physical hygiene, manners and department and above all the techniques of the service, knowledge of human nature and behavioral skills in human relations.

The candidates are trained and drilled through classroom lectures, practical simulations, role-playing and study of actual cases. At the end of the program candidates are given written and practical tests before they sit for a Civil Aviation Exams"<sup>16</sup>

Another example is provided by Captain Naji Absi, Head of M.E.A.'s Operation Department.

"The Operations Department works to ensure that all M.E.A. flights are executed in the highest professional standards as dictated by established international criteria...One of these assignments is the renewal of pilots licenses every six months. It begins with a satisfactory medical check-up. Additionally, every six months, pilots must undergo special examinations exposing them to abnormal and emergency situations as dictated by the relevant aircraft manufacturer. This is done in an approved Simulator...following this, pilots undergo further examinations during a normal flight (Route Check).

Finally, they must sit for an annual Refresher Course related to the technical feature of the aircraft type that they operate."<sup>17</sup>

These two examples give us a clearer picture of the importance and intensity of training and development at M.E.A. The next section provides us with information about the latest programs that M.E.A. has recently taken as part of upgrading its services.

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<sup>16</sup> Naim El-Hage. "The Role and Training of the Flight Attendant". *Cedar Wings*. Issue 34, July/august 1996. 117

<sup>17</sup> Captain Naji Absi. "Safety is Our Main Concern" *Cedar Wings*. Issue 34, July/August 1996. 116.

#### 4.2.5 Some of the Current Development Programs.

On January 1996, Boeing and Airbus developed a Computer Base Training (CBT) software that was introduced to Flight Operations at M.E.A. On June 1996, a Customer Care Program named the "M.E.A. Presidents Club" was launched. Among the services it offers are:

"access to airport lounges at Beirut International Airport as well as at several other international airports, chauffeur transportation to and from BIA, up to double normal baggage allowance, a monthly billing option, as well as several other unique service with car rentals, hotel reservation etc..."<sup>18</sup>

Several training programs will be implemented in the coming years, such as the Graduate Trainee Program, the Management Trainee Program, and the Sales and Traffic Trainee Program. In addition, A.U.B. and M.E.A. had joint ventured into a program called the Executive Development Program, which aims "to build Mr./Ms. Airline - an Airline Executive ready to serve in any location, at the strategic level of management."<sup>19</sup>

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In conclusion, this section presented M.E.A. through the management's eyes. The next part provides us with results of the customer questionnaire. Thus now we will see M.E.A. through the customer's eyes.

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<sup>18</sup> Cedar Wings Issue 34, 115

<sup>19</sup> Khattar Hadethi. "Another First" Cedar Wings, Issue 36, November/December 1996, 100

### 4.3 Results of Customer Questionnaires

Before giving out a questionnaire, the respondents were asked if they had traveled with M.E.A. within the past year. Some of them actually traveled with M.E.A. within the last three months. I wanted to emphasize this point because my study would be of no use if I collected the level of satisfaction of people who traveled during the Civil War, or after it by few years. Thus, I considered anyone who traveled with M.E.A. within the last year as a good respondent. In addition, I did not want to concentrate on certain factors such as people within a certain age group, or business people but not students, and so forth. The reason behind this is that, in my opinion, any one who travels is a potential customer of an aviation service. When one seeks services, he/she should receive the same treatment regardless of his/her age, gender, nationality, occupation and so on.

Tables 4.1-4.30 presented in this chapter show the results of the customer questionnaire. To start with, the age group of my sample ranged from 15 to 60 years of age. The concentration was on the two age groups 21-30 and 31-40 years of age. Thus, 60% of the samples were between 21-40 years old. Table 4.1 presents the age ranges, frequency distribution and their percentages. Figure 4.1 presents the age ranges and percentage.

<b>Age Ranges</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
15~20	30	24.0%
21~30	46	36.8%
31~40	29	23.2%
41~50	13	10.4%
51~60	4	3.2%
Blank	3	2.4%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most of the samples were men. They constituted 71.2%, women 26.4% and 2.4% were unanswered. Table 4.2 shows these percentages.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	89	71.2%
Female	33	26.4%
Blank	3	2.4%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4.3 presents the marital status of the sample. 67.2% of respondents were single, 30.4% were married and 2.4% were unanswered. 71.2% of the respondents were Lebanese and 28.8% were foreigners from countries such as Algeria, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Table 4.4 lists the nationalities and their percentages.

**Table 4.3 Customers' Marital Status**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	84	67.2%
Married	38	30.4%
Blank	3	2.4%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100%

**Table 4.4 Customers' Nationalities**

<b>Nationalities</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Algerian	1	0.8%
Australian	2	1.6%
British	4	3.2%
Canadian	1	0.8%
French	4	3.2%
German	1	0.8%
Greek	1	0.8%
Jordanian	4	3.2%
Lebanese	89	71.2%
Palastinian	3	2.4%
Saudi	9	7.2%
Syrians	5	4.0%
Blank	1	0.8%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100%

Lastly, the occupations were numerous, ranging from clerical work to directors. The sample of occupations came from different businesses, be it construction, consultants, broadcasting, school, universities, and so on. Table 4.5 indicates to us the various occupations and their percentages.

Question 1 (Table 4.6) inquires about the frequency of travel. 52% of the respondents travel "once a year", and 40.8% travel "more than once a year". Only 2.4% travel "less than once a year". Therefore, I can safely state that 97.6% of the respondents travel frequently. Question 2 (Table 4.7) inquires about the frequency of

travel with M.E.A. About 51.2% frequently travel with M.E.A., 19.2% often, 25.6% sometimes and 4% hardly. In question 3 (Table 4.8) 76.8% of the people consider the ticket price as average compared to other airlines, only 18.4% consider it as expensive.

**Table 4.5 Customers' Occupation**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Accountant	5	4.0%
Administration	6	4.8%
Agent	1	0.8%
Analyst	1	0.8%
Architect	3	2.4%
Assistance Film Director	1	0.8%
Clerk	5	4.0%
Computer Operator	1	0.8%
Computer Programmer	2	1.6%
Controller	2	1.6%
Director	4	3.2%
Employees	2	1.6%
Engineers	15	12.0%
Executive Secretary	1	0.8%
Foreman	1	0.8%
Housewife	2	1.6%
Master Student	1	0.8%
Merchant	2	1.6%
Reporter	2	1.6%
Sales Manager	1	0.8%
Secretary	2	1.6%
Student	57	45.6%
Teacher	2	1.6%
Technician	2	1.6%
Translator	1	0.8%
Blank	3	2.4%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4.6 Frequency of Travel**

<b>Travel Frequency</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Weekly	1	0.8%
Monthly	5	4.0%
More than once a year	51	40.8%
Once a year	65	52.0%
Less than once a year	3	2.4%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 4.7 Frequency of Travel with M.E.A**

<b>Travel Frequency</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
All the Time	30	24.0%
Very Often	34	27.2%
Often	24	19.2%
Sometimes	32	25.6%
Hardly Ever	5	4.0%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 4.8 M.E.A.'s Airfare Compared to Other Airlines**

<b>Rate of Airfare</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Expensive	23	18.4%
Average	96	76.8%
Below average	6	4.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Question 4 (Tables 4.9-4.16) requires from the customer to rate in the order of importance what he/she looks for when choosing an airline. Thus, as a result of the questionnaire, for the customer the most important items to the least important were as follows:

1. Airline Safety
2. Quality of Service
3. Airfare Pricing
4. Cleanliness of Airlines
5. Seating Comfort
6. Punctuality of Take-Off
7. Time of Departure
8. Point of Destination



**Table 4.9 The Degree of Importance of  
Airline Safety to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	74	59.2%
2	17	13.6%
3	12	9.6%
4	8	6.4%
5	8	6.4%
6	3	2.4%
7	3	2.4%
8	0	0.0%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.10 The Degree of Importance of  
Quality of Service to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	32	25.6%
2	41	32.8%
3	21	16.8%
4	10	8.0%
5	7	5.6%
6	6	4.8%
7	6	4.8%
8	2	1.6%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.11 The Degree of Importance of  
the Airfare to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	19	15.2%
2	24	19.2%
3	18	14.4%
4	16	12.8%
5	19	15.2%
6	11	8.8%
7	7	5.6%
8	11	8.8%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.12 The Degree of Importance of Cleanliness of Airline to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	13	10.4%
2	17	13.6%
3	19	15.2%
4	27	21.6%
5	16	12.8%
6	18	14.4%
7	9	7.2%
8	6	4.8%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.13 The Degree of Importance of Seating Comfort to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	18	14.4%
2	9	7.2%
3	14	11.2%
4	27	21.6%
5	23	18.4%
6	15	12.0%
7	11	8.8%
8	8	6.4%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.14 The Degree of Importance of Punctuality of Take-Off to Customers**

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	22	17.6%
2	17	13.6%
3	12	9.6%
4	14	11.2%
5	14	11.2%
6	22	17.6%
7	10	8.0%
8	14	11.2%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.15 The Degree of Importance of  
Time of Departure to Customers**

Ratings	Frequency Distribution	Percentage
1	10	8.0%
2	7	5.6%
3	12	9.6%
4	8	6.4%
5	14	11.2%
6	17	13.6%
7	32	25.6%
8	25	20.0%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

**Table 4.16 The Degree of Importance of  
Point of Destination to Customers**

Ratings	Frequency Distribution	Percentage
1	6	4.8%
2	14	11.2%
3	10	8.0%
4	2	1.6%
5	7	5.6%
6	14	11.2%
7	28	22.4%
8	44	35.2%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

Question 5 inquires about what other airlines do the respondents travel with. The responses were Air France, British Airways, Emirates, Gulf Air, K.L.M., Saudi Arabian Airlines, Alia, Alitalia, Cyprus, Olympic, Egypt, Lufthansa, Kuwait Airways, Swiss Air, Qantas, Canadian Airlines, T.W.A., Balkan, Delta, Malaysian, Iberian, Korean, Nigerian, Polish, and Yemeni. Question 6 (Table 4.17) rates the safety measures. About 81.6% find the safety measures at M.E.A. as good, 16% find it neither good nor bad, and 2.4% find it bad.

**Table 4.17 Customers' Rating of M.E.A.'s  
Safety Measures**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Good	48	38.4%
Fairly Good	54	43.2%
Neither Good nor Bad	20	16.0%
Not Very Good	2	1.6%
Not Good at All	1	0.8%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

About 60%, in question 7 (Table 4.18), rate the cleanliness of the airplane and restrooms to be good, 26.4% consider it neither good nor bad and 13.6% find it bad.

**Table 4.18 Customers' Rating of M.E.A.'s  
Cleanliness**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Good	28	22.4%
Fairly Good	47	37.6%
Neither Good nor Bad	33	26.4%
Not Very Good	12	9.6%
Not Good at All	5	4.0%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

Question 8 (Table 4.19) asks about the seating comfort, 48.8% find the seats on M.E.A. planes to be comfortable, 26.6% find it neither good nor bad and 24.8% find it bad.

**Table 4.19 Customers' Rating of M.E.A.'s  
Seating Comfort**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Good	16	12.8%
Fairly Good	45	36.0%
Neither Good nor Bad	33	26.4%
Not Very Good	23	18.4%
Not Good at All	8	6.4%
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%

Question 9 (Table 4.20) evaluates the service at M.E.A. According to the sample, 46.4% find the service good, 28.8% find it neither good nor bad, and 24.8% find it bad.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Very Good	12	9.6%	9.25	85.56
Fairly Good	46	36.8%	43.25	1870.56
Neither Good nor Bad	36	28.8%	33.25	1105.56
Not Very Good	23	18.4%	20.25	410.06
Not Good at All	8	6.4%	5.25	27.56
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3499.31</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.75</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>28.22</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.31</b>			

Questions 10-19 rate different aspects of M.E.A.'s employees. These aspects are related to the quality of service given. In question 10, (Table 4.21) 66.4% of the customers views the employees as well groomed. 19,2% are uncertain, and 14.4% do not find them well groomed.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	19	15.2%	16.62	276.22
Agree	64	51.2%	61.62	3797.02
Uncertain	24	19.2%	21.62	467.42
Disagree	11	8.8%	8.62	74.30
Strongly disagree	7	5.6%	4.62	21.34
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>4360.10</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.38</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>35.16</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.93</b>			

Question 11 (Table 4.22) rates the employees at being friendly: that is being comforting and warm-hearted. The results were that 57.6% agreed that they were friendly. 19.2 % were uncertain, and 23.2% disagreed.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	20	16.0%	17.44	304.15
Agree	52	41.6%	49.44	2444.31
Uncertain	24	19.2%	21.44	459.67
Disagree	21	16.8%	18.44	340.03
Strongly disagree	8	6.4%	5.44	29.59
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3577.77</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.56</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>28.85</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.37</b>			

Question 12 (Table 4.23) rates the employee at being courteous: considerate towards others, polite, and civil. 48% considered the employees as being courteous; 36% were uncertain, and 16% disagreed.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	19	15.2%	16.42	269.62
Agree	41	32.8%	38.42	1476.10
Uncertain	45	36.0%	42.42	1799.46
Disagree	14	11.2%	11.42	130.42
Strongly disagree	6	4.8%	3.42	11.70
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3417.67</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.58</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>27.56</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.25</b>			

Question 13 (Table 4.24) rates the employees at being efficient. 47.2% considered them efficient, 30.4% were uncertain, and 22.4% saw the employees as inefficient.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	13	10.4%	10.3	106.09
Agree	46	36.8%	43.3	1874.89
Uncertain	38	30.4%	35.3	1246.09
Disagree	22	17.6%	19.3	372.49
Strongly disagree	6	4.8%	3.3	10.89
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3504.36</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.70</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>28.26</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.32</b>			

At being attentive in question 14 (Table 4.25) 44% stated that they were attentive to their needs, 28.8% were uncertain, 27.2% disagreed.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	13	10.4%	10.18	103.63
Agree	42	33.6%	39.18	1535.07
Uncertain	36	28.8%	33.18	1100.91
Disagree	23	18.4%	20.18	407.23
Strongly disagree	11	8.8%	8.18	66.91
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>3213.76</b>
<b>Mean:</b>	<b>2.82</b>			
<b>Variance:</b>	<b>25.92</b>			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	<b>5.09</b>			

Being honest implies that the employees are sincere, not deceptive when trying to attend to the customers' needs. Question 15 (Table 4.26) evaluates

their honesty. The results show that 47.2% were considered to be honest, 36.8% were uncertain, and 16% viewed them as dishonest.

**Table 4.26 Customers' Rating of M.E.A.'s Employees Being Honest**

Rating	Frequency Distribution	Percentage	Deviation	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	17	13.6%	14.4	207.36
Agree	42	33.6%	39.4	1552.36
Uncertain	46	36.8%	43.4	1883.56
Disagree	14	11.2%	11.4	129.96
Strongly disagree	6	4.8%	3.4	11.56
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%		3784.8
<b>Mean:</b>	2.60			
<b>Variance:</b>	30.52			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	5.52			

Question 16 (Table 4.27) rates the employees at being organized. 48.8% considered them as organized, 28.8% were uncertain, and 22.4% saw them as disorganized.

**Table 4.27 Customers' Rating of M.E.A.'s Employees Being Organized**

Rating	Frequency Distribution	Percentage	Deviation	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	13	10.4%	10.31	106.30
Agree	48	38.4%	45.31	2053.00
Uncertain	36	28.8%	33.31	1109.56
Disagree	21	16.8%	18.31	335.26
Strongly disagree	7	5.6%	4.31	18.58
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%		3622.68
<b>Mean:</b>	2.69			
<b>Variance:</b>	29.22			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	5.4			

Table 4.28 shows that 52% found the employees to be helpful; 26.4% were uncertain; and 21.6% saw the employees as unhelpful.



<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	20	16.0%	17.42	303.46
Agree	45	36.0%	42.42	1799.46
Uncertain	33	26.4%	30.42	925.38
Disagree	21	16.8%	18.42	339.30
Strongly disagree	6	4.8%	3.42	11.70
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%		3379.28
<b>Mean:</b>	2.58			
<b>Variance:</b>	27.25			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	5.22			

Having a pleasant attitude was dealt with in question 18 (Table 4.29).

50.4% found them to be pleasant; 28% were uncertain, and 21.6% found them to be unpleasant.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	17	13.6%	14.34	205.64
Agree	46	36.8%	43.34	1878.36
Uncertain	35	28.0%	32.34	1045.88
Disagree	16	12.8%	13.34	177.96
Strongly disagree	11	8.8%	8.34	69.56
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%		3377.38
<b>Mean:</b>	2.66			
<b>Variance:</b>	27.24			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	5.22			

The last item in judging the different aspects of the employees is the understanding part. Question 19 (Table 4.30) inquires about whether the employees are understanding or not. 52.8% found them to be understanding, 25.6% were uncertain of their answer, and 21.6% found them not understanding.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Deviation</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Strongly Agree	15	12.0%	12.36	152.77
Agree	51	40.8%	48.36	2338.69
Uncertain	32	25.6%	29.36	862.01
Disagree	18	14.4%	15.36	235.93
Strongly disagree	9	7.2%	6.36	40.45
<b>Total:</b>	125	100.0%		3629.85
<b>Mean:</b>	2.64			
<b>Variance:</b>	29.27			
<b>Standard Deviation:</b>	5.41			

The last question, question 20, asks for any suggestion for improving the service of M.E.A. Surprisingly, many people filled out this section. Among the suggestions were things that M.E.A. was already in the process of doing, such as pumping new blood in the company, or changing their airplanes, upgrading their meals and so on. But other things were complaints about certain incidents, or simply suggestions for improving.

The most common complaints and suggestions were as follows:

1. Take-Off and arrival was hardly on time. The suggestion was to respect or to reschedule these timings, not unless it was a matter of emergency.
2. To improve the cleanliness in the restrooms in the airplanes.
3. To increase the library material in the airplane.

4. To provide special price offers for students travelling with M.E.A. and for the Lebanese in particular. Prices were stated to be expensive frequently in this question.
  5. M.E.A should improve their reservation operations. Most of the time, they claim that the seats are fully booked, meanwhile, with interference the seat is available.
  6. The service rendered in the airport is very unorganized and chaotic.
  7. Better variety of movie selection; have entertainment for children.
  8. Pilot can provide the passengers with certain information relevant to the flight taken when travelling.
  9. Hostesses tend to speak French even when spoken to in another language like Arabic or English. Some customers do not know French. Hostesses should answer in the language spoken to, not unless they themselves do not know the language, like the Russian language.
- 
10. Once while I was travelling, one passenger next to me asked for more water, the waiter answered by saying "I have others to serve" and he refused to give him more water.
  11. They (employees) should have a better attitude towards customers, instead of doing their job as if they have been forced to do it.
  12. Professionalism at M.E.A. is questionable for customers.

13. For the First and Business classes, passengers are usually treated well. But passengers are mistreated in economy class, especially to certain destinations; my suggestion is to encourage M.E.A. employees for the work they are doing and to control their work.

14. Try to satisfy your employees.

15. I (one of the respondents) travel with M.E.A. because it has our Cedar on it, and because I meet fellow Lebanese on board.

I would like to conclude the customer questionnaire by saying that the responses speak louder than anything else does. Customers are not fully satisfied with the quality of service offered at M.E.A. For a customer to leave with a good impression of the service company, he/she should receive more than what was expected. An average treatment would not be enough. Outburst from some employees towards the passengers is not appropriate. One might add that at times the customer was continuously nagging, or misbehaving. Even though, there are professional ways to treat and avoid such situation. This leads us to the next section, the conclusion of the whole research topic.

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### 5.1 Summary

The customer questionnaire provided us with information about the level of satisfaction. Customers were not satisfied. Having that in mind, I can conclude with this cycle: If employees are satisfied with M.E.A., they will treat customers well under the condition that they are properly oriented, trained, and developed. Once customers are treated well, they are satisfied. Therefore, they will be choosing M.E.A. as a priority when travelling. Having the number of customers increasing, profits will increase too.

To summarize, service companies should have an overall mission statement which targets excellent service. This mission statement should be in the blood of not only the employees but also the managers. Certain standards need to be established to reach the service strategy. These standards could be set with the help of employees since they are the ones who are in continuous contact with the customer. Management should invest in educating its employees. However, this is not enough. Companies could educate their employees but mistreat them in any manner. The result would be a dissatisfied employee. No matter how much money is pumped into education, performance standard would not increase if the employee were dissatisfied. This leads us to the need of establishing means of measuring and monitoring performance standards. Having recognized the level of performance, whether good or bad, it should be dealt with immediately. Service excellence should be reinforced.

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## 52 Recommendation

Yes, M.E.A. has a Training and Development Center. It is starting to improve. In addition, money is invested in developing programs geared towards satisfying the customer, that has not yet shown their results. Meanwhile, customers are not fully satisfied. As I was conducting my interview, I have realized the following:

- ◆ For the Training and Development Center, there is not an evaluation method used to assess the effectiveness of the center. It is important to evaluate the effectiveness and influence the Training and Development Center has on its employees. Taking their opinion is of value. The purpose of evaluations is to check whether the initial purpose and desired outcome were reached. It evaluates the training method and so on. Various evaluation methods have been provided in chapter 2. Evaluating training through the customer is one thing, and evaluating through the employee is another thing.
- ◆ Follow-up does not exist. Without evaluation and follow-up, how can one decide if the training is appropriate for the employee?
- ◆ Some of the methods used for collecting information about the level of customer satisfaction are put in a situation where the respondent will rate M.E.A. as being good. Take for example, people who are interviewed at their offices or at M.E.A. premises, it is obvious that a customer has a tendency not to complain after any problem has passed for a period of time. In addition, when an M.E.A. representative comes to anyone's office for the interview, the customer will treat the representative well for the mere fact that he/she came all the way to his/her office. Therefore, in my opinion, when collecting information such as the level of

satisfaction, the sample should be randomly done of those who traveled with M.E.A. What is the use of going to someone who likes you and asking him/her "Do you like my service?" One should be concerned with those who are satisfied with M.E.A. but not as much as to those who are dissatisfied.

- ◆ This leads to the reason of why I disagree that questionnaires on the plane are fictitious. When a customer is dissatisfied, he/she is so because he/she was mistreated in a certain situation. Attention should be granted to the customer even if he/she is awfully mad. The questionnaire on the plane provides a means for the customer to express him/herself.
- ◆ Since the in flight questionnaires are considered "fictitious" and "inadequate enough" and there is not any other means of collecting customers' opinion on the plane, I recommend that M.E.A. uses another method of evaluating employees performance. My suggestion is to have part of the role of the training instructor is to be a "quality controller" for the services off-the-ground. He/she travels with M.E.A. to different destinations at different seasons. Part of his/her job, other than instructing, is to observe the employees' performance off-the-ground.

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His/her evaluation should be structured and recorded for further constructive discussions with the employees in class, not on the plane: to reward good behavior and to constructively criticize inappropriate behavior. Through this method, there is no need for role-play since the instructor is witnessing the situation in real life.

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### 5.3 Recommended Further Research

I would recommend for further study to:

1. Collect information about the employees' perception of customers and the employees' level of satisfaction towards M.E.A.'s orientation, training and development programs.
2. Distribute the customer questionnaire again to measure and compare the level of customer satisfaction with M.E.A. It is expected to increase since M.E.A. is investing money on new training programs.



## Appendix A

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Good Morning. My name is Mrs. Zaka'a El-Murr Tabet. I am a graduate student at the Lebanese American University (L.A.U.), Business Studies Division. I am conducting a research on Training and Development at the Middle East Airlines (M.E.A.) aimed at increasing the level of customer satisfaction. Your responses will be treated confidentially and will only be used for the purpose of this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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1. Do you orient new employees? If yes, go to question 3.
2. If no, why not. Go to question 6.
3. How long is the orientation process? (Ask for copy of orientation schedule if there is.)
4. What is covered during orientation? (Ask for copy of orientation checklist if there is.)
5. Do you provide an orientation package, which includes brochures, orientation schedule and checklist? (ask for copy)
6. In your opinion, what are the benefits of orientation?
7. In your opinion, what is lost if you do not orient your new recruits?
8. Do you train your employees, if yes, go to question 10.
9. If no, why not? Go to question 11.
10. How do you develop the training program?
  - A. How do you determine the need for training?
  - B. Is there any learning objectives set? If so, what are they?
  - C. How is the subject matter chosen?

- C. How is the subject matter chosen?
- D. Is there a skill inventory used? If so, ask for a sample.
- E. How do you determine when, where, who, how much time, and costs for training?
- F. What training method do you apply? and why. (On-the-job or off-the-job, Demonstration (sitting by Nellie), classroom lectures, video and films, vestibule training, role playing, case studies, laboratory training, simulation exercise, computer-based training, programmed instruction, apprenticeship,...)
- G. How do you evaluate the training program? (Post-Training method, Pre-Post Training method, Pre-Post Training method with Control Group)
- H. Do you achieve your objectives?
- I. Do you measure the following?
  - a. Reaction: Did the employees like the program?
  - b. Knowledge: Did the employees learn the information taught?
  - c. Behavior: Are the employees using the new skills or behavior on the job?
  - d. Attitude: Do the employees demonstrate any new attitude?
  - e. Productivity: Did the training increase productivity and was it cost effective?
- J. Who conducts the training and why was he/she chosen?
- K. Do you follow up with your employees and how?

11. In your opinion, what are the objectives of training?

12. In your opinion, what are the benefits of training?
13. Do you develop your employees? If yes, go to question 15.
14. If no, why not?
15. What development methods do you apply? (job rotation, assistant-to position, committee assignment, lecture courses, simulation, out-door training)
16. Is there any form of coaching employees? If no, go to question 18.
17. How do you coach your employees?
18. Is there any form of counseling employees? If no, go to question 20.
19. How do you counsel your employees?
20. In your opinion, what are the objectives of development?
21. In your opinion, what are the benefits of development?
22. Is M.E.A. being directed towards corporate development? Why and how?
23. Lastly, do you believe your department is sufficiently financed for its survival?

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I would like to have information about the following:

- a. History of M.E.A.
- b. History of the Training and Development Department
- c. Amount of employees who are in direct contact with the customers
- d. General job titles of employees who are in direct contact with customers.
- e. The type of services M.E.A. offers.
- f. List of its main competitors
- g. List of M.E.A. branches outside of Lebanon [destination and departure time(s)].

Dear Customer,

My name is Mrs. Zaka'a El-Murr Tabet. I am a graduate student at the Lebanese American University (L.A.U.), Business Studies Division. I am conducting a research on Training and Development at the Middle East Airlines (M.E.A.) aimed at increasing the level of customer satisfaction. Your responses will be treated confidentially and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Thank You