

## **The Impact of Internal Marketing on Employee Satisfaction: A Case Study of Sonatrach, Maintenance Department Laghouat**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aims to investigate the impact of internal marketing practices on employee satisfaction in the maintenance department of Sonatrach in Laghouat, Algeria. The study focuses on the following practices: empowerment, training programs, incentives and rewards, and internal communication. These practices were selected based on previous studies. The study population consists of employees in the department, and to achieve the study's objectives, a questionnaire was distributed. Various statistical methods were utilized to analyze the data and test the research hypotheses. The results showed a statistically significant impact of empowerment practices, training programs, internal communication, and incentives and rewards on employee satisfaction.

The study concluded that achieving employee satisfaction at Sonatrach requires implementing internal marketing practices.

**Keywords:** Internal marketing, employee satisfaction, empowerment, training programs, incentives and rewards.

**Jel Classification Codes:** M31, M12, J28, M54, M53, M52.

### **1 Introduction**

In light of the conflicts witnessed around the world, it has become necessary for organizations to focus on marketing to provide the best service. Among these are economic organizations that seek to establish their position in the market and achieve profits in their operations and activities. Therefore, it is essential for them to focus on marketing. The role that internal marketing emphasizes is achieving the organization's objectives and providing high-quality services by adopting methods that contribute to raising the skill levels of employees and increasing their awareness of the role they play in achieving these objectives. Internal marketing aims to disseminate and exchange information, develop capabilities and competencies, establish incentive systems, create a suitable organizational climate, retain employees, manage communications, instill a culture of quality, and improve productivity (Al-Rousan, 2011, p. 345).

Conversely, the Algerian economic institution, like Sonatrach, is undergoing many changes in preparation for entering the World Trade Organization, which entails increased competitiveness and a closer approach to internal customers (employees) before external ones to ensure their satisfaction as they are fundamental to achieving quality and efficiency in production, which can enhance the institution's competitiveness and prepare it to face these major challenges. This means applying internal marketing with all its effective procedures (Mansaria, Araba, Boularbah, 2014).

#### **1-1 Problem Of The Study:**

The problem of the study is represented by the following question: Is there a statistically significant impact of internal marketing practices on employee satisfaction? Based on this issue, we can pose the following questions:

- 1 - Is there a statistically significant effect of empowerment on employee satisfaction?
- 2 - Is there a statistically significant effect of training programs on employee satisfaction?
- 3 - Is there a statistically significant effect of incentives and rewards on employee satisfaction?
- 4 - Is there a statistically significant effect of internal communication on employee satisfaction?

### 1-2 Importance Of The Study:

The importance of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Internal marketing holds great importance in satisfying the needs and desires of employees and achieving the organization's objectives.
2. Internal marketing is one of the strategies that organizations seek to implement to provide new quality services.
3. This research can contribute to encouraging organizations to adopt internal marketing due to its role in enhancing job satisfaction for both employees and customers.
4. Enriching information and increasing knowledge about the role of internal marketing and job satisfaction as significant topics in the present time, as organizations face severe complexities, making it an important topic in the field of management

### 1-3 Objectives Of The Study:

Through this study, we aim to achieve several objectives, the most important of which are:

1. Highlighting the importance of internal marketing and its role in enhancing job satisfaction.
2. The role of internal marketing dimensions in job satisfaction.
3. Attempting to identify the main obstacles facing the application of the concept of internal marketing within the organization to empower and provide recommendations and suggestions that help achieve job satisfaction through internal marketing.
4. Understanding the reality of service in light of applying the concept of internal marketing.

### 1-4 Limits Of The Study:

Human limits: Employees of Sonatrach – Maintenance Department, Laghouat.

Temporal limits: August 2024.

## 2 Literature Review

2. Study by Mansaria, RachidAraba, and BoularbahGharib (2014) "The Reality of Applying Internal Marketing Procedures in Algerian Economic Institutions: A Case Study of Sonatrach in HassiMessaoud." This study aimed to evaluate the reality of applying internal marketing procedures in the Algerian economic institution Sonatrach through a field survey of the phenomenon at the four regional directorates of the institution during the first quarter of 2013, using interviews and questionnaires to study and analyze the phenomenon. The results indicated weak application of the internal marketing concept in the institution in general, with a relative disparity in applying the essential procedures individually within the institution.
3. 2. Study by Ayman Abdullah Muhammad Abu Bakr (2015) - "The Impact of Internal Marketing Practices on Employee Satisfaction: A Case Study of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank – UAE – Al Ain Branch." The study aimed to test the impact of internal marketing practices on employee satisfaction in the case of Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, which included practices such as empowerment, training programs, incentives, and internal communication. The researcher found a statistically significant impact of empowerment, training programs, and internal communication on employee satisfaction in Islamic banks.
4. 3. Study by Malik Muhammad Al-Majali, Amin Ayed Al-Bashabsha, and Hani Muhammad Al-Majali (2016) - "The Impact of Internal Marketing Dimensions on Employee Satisfaction and its Effect on Their Performance." The study identified the effect of internal marketing dimensions (organizational culture, internal interaction, motivation, and training) on employee job satisfaction and its effect on their performance in commercial banks operating in Al-Karak Governorate.

## 1 Theoretical Framework Of The Study:

### 3-1-Internal Marketing:

The concept of internal marketing does not have a unified and agreed-upon definition, but there are many attempts and ideas to present the concept of internal marketing. Some researchers argue that the first emergence of this concept was in the early 1950s by Japanese quality managers, viewing the activities performed by employees as internal products. The organization should focus its attention on the needs of employees and satisfy them through the activities performed by individuals to ensure a highly efficient workforce that contributes to customer satisfaction (Muhammad, 2008, p. 130).

### **3-2-Objectives Of Internal Marketing:**

The objectives of internal marketing are defined as follows:

- Attracting suitable employees for administrative positions and communicating with customers.
- Retaining good and suitable employees.
- Influencing and motivating employees to exert their utmost effort to succeed in the interactive relationship with customers.
- Internal marketing can improve all processes in the organization to ensure that its resources are utilized by employees for the benefit of customers.

### **3-3-Foundations Of Internal Marketing:**

The concept of internal marketing relies on the attention to human resources within the organization, as it is the cornerstone of organizational success in the current competitive environment. It is based on two main processes:

1. Managing attitudes: Directing all employees towards its objectives, disseminating the philosophy of dealing with customers, and promoting marketing thinking within the organization.
2. Managing communications: Ensuring a good communication system between different management levels and ensuring the flow of information that enables them to perform their required tasks, especially those functions directly related to customers. (Mansaria, Araba, Boularbah, 2014, p. 3)

### **3-4-Dimensions Of Internal Marketing:**

Based on previous studies, the dimensions of internal marketing consist of several elements, including:

Employee Selection: The selection and hiring of employees is one of the main ideas included in internal marketing, which aims to find a match between individuals and available jobs (Suwaydan, 2008, p. 58). The organization should take into consideration the characteristics of the work or job, including workload, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and the variety of work, such as autonomy and self-direction, as well as the type of feedback received by the employee about their performance, regardless of the working conditions available from physical, social, and psychological perspectives (Abdulbari, Zahir, 2008, p. 81).

#### **3-4-1 Training:**

Training is considered one of the most significant long-term investments an organization can make, as it balances the individual's abilities with their job requirements. Through training, employees acquire the necessary information to perform their work effectively, gain new skills, adjust their attitudes, and improve their job behavior (Mustafa, 1994, p. 303). Training activities help employees improve their job performance by enhancing their skills or increasing their knowledge (Aktham&Rawida, 2010, p. 503).

#### **3-4-2 Incentives And Rewards:**

If wages or salaries are the compensation individuals receive for holding a job, incentives are the rewards they receive for exceptional performance (Maher, 2003, p. 102). Thus, the application of internal marketing by organizations involves caring for their employees, not only setting demands but also rewarding them (Aboul&Ayoub, 2003, p. 98).

#### **3-4-3 Empowerment:**

Bruce defines empowerment as a management style where managers and other organization members participate in the decision-making process. This process is defined not by formal positions of power but by systems of training, rewards, participation in authority, leadership style, and organizational culture (Bruce, 2003, p. 28). Ongori emphasizes that empowering individuals in decision-making roles and encouraging their participation enhances responsiveness to environmental changes, thereby increasing job satisfaction (Bruce, 2009, p. 23).

#### **3-4-4 Internal Communication:**

Internal communication is defined by Mansour as "a network of activities through which information is collected and transferred, contributing to effective decision-making and high-quality customer service by providing employees with the necessary information" (Mansour, 2008, p. 66). Internal communication is directed at an organization's employees to inform and motivate them while maintaining a healthy social environment within the organization (Ali Falah, 2010, p. 62).

### 3-2 Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction, according to Hoppeck, is a combination of psychological, material, and environmental conditions that make an individual genuinely say, "I am satisfied with my job." Vroom sees job satisfaction as the feeling of equivalence in one's work, derived from the positive outcomes it brings (Mohamed, 2007, p. 45).

Nestern defines job satisfaction as the sum of feelings an individual derives from their work within an organization. It consists of attitudes about the nature of the job, available opportunities for promotion, relationships with coworkers, and the services provided by the organization (Jude, 2008, p. 287).

Herzberg categorizes job satisfaction into two types:

1. External Influences: Satisfaction measured by wages, additional benefits, leadership, personal relationships, policies, and procedures.
2. Internal Motivation: Satisfaction derived from feelings of achievement, participation in meaningful work, recognition, gaining responsibility, and the intrinsic value of the work itself (Herzberg, 1966, p. 24).

## 4 Statistical Study:

### 4-1-Study Tool:

The research relied on a questionnaire to collect data. It included one section for the independent variable, internal marketing practices (empowerment, training programs, incentives and rewards, and internal communication), consisting of sixteen indicators to measure the four dimensions. The second section focused on the dependent variable, job satisfaction, with six indicators

Study Population:

The study population consisted of employees at Sonatrach's Maintenance Department in Laghouat, aiming to examine the impact of internal marketing practices on employee satisfaction. To achieve this goal, a questionnaire was distributed among a sample of 60 employees. A total of 47 valid responses were collected, representing a response rate of 78%.

### 4-2-Statistical Analysis:

1. Arithmetic Mean for Questionnaire Responses:

The study used a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' opinions on the questionnaire items, with the following scoring:

- Strongly Disagree (1) - Disagree (2) - Neutral (3) - Agree (4) - Strongly Agree (5)

2. Regression Analysis:

Regression analysis was used to test the study model and the significance of the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. The analysis scale was adjusted based on the averages of respondents' answers at the case study organization as the following:

**Table No. (01) :** Analysis Scale.

Degree of approval	Arithmetic mean
Weak	From 1 to less than or equal to 2.49
Medium	From 2.50 to less than or equal to 3.49
high	From 3.50 to 5

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

### 4-3 Reliability Of The Measurement Tool:

The reliability of the measurement tool refers to its consistency in producing similar results. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency, which reflects the correlation between responses to all items in the questionnaire. A higher alpha coefficient indicates higher reliability, with acceptable values being 0.60 or above. The reliability results for this study are presented in Table 2, based on SPSS analysis.

**Table No. (02):** Stability of the study tool.

Inbound Marketing Practices		
Alpha coefficient value	Number of paragraphs	Variable
0.8244	4	Empowerment
0.8276	4	Training Programs
0.8999	4	Incentives & Rewards
0.8290	4	Intercom
Dependent variable		
Alpha coefficient value	Number of paragraphs	Variable
0.8989	7	Employee satisfaction
	23	Paragraphs of the questionnaire as a whole

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

#### 4-4-Empowerment As The Most Influential Factor

Among the dimensions of internal marketing, empowerment is identified as the most critical and impactful factor in achieving employee satisfaction compared to other practices.

Empowerment: Arithmetic Averages and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Study Sample Members on the Empowerment Dimension in the Directorate of Maintenance of the Wilayat of Laghouat

**Table No. (03):** Arithmetic Averages and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Sample

Rank	Grade	Arithmetic mean	Ferry	Paragraph number
1	Medium	2.99	The Department is keen to provide the necessary facilities to perform the work	1
3	Weak	2.43	I have the opportunity to perform my work without constant monitoring	2
4	Weak	2.26	Management provides me with opportunities for creativity and innovation while working on the job	3
2	Medium	2.68	The management delegates powers to me to make some appropriate decisions related to the requirements of the work	4
Medium		2.59	Empowerment	

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

Observation: Table (03) shows that the arithmetic means for empowerment items ranged between 2.26 and 2.99, with a general evaluation of "weak to moderate."

**Table 04:** Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Training Programs.

Rank	Grade	Arithmetic mean	Ferry	Paragraph number
4	Medium	3.20	The available training programs are sufficient	1
1	high	4.35	The management is interested in training employees and developing their skills	2
2	Medium	4.02	I feel that the training covers a real shortage and gives me more skills.	3
3	high	3.66	The department prepares and implements training programs for employees periodically	4

high	3.80	Training Programs
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**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

Observation: Table (04) shows that the arithmetic means for training programs ranged between 3.20 and 4.35, with a general evaluation of "moderate to high."

**Table 05:** Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Incentives and Rewards.

Rank	Grade	Arithmetic mean	Ferry	Paragraph number
4	Medium	3.45	I see that incentives and rewards are commensurate with my level of performance at work.	1
3	Medium	3.46	The institution has a fair system of incentives and rewards directed to employees	2
1	high	4.13	I receive praise and praise from my boss whenever I do well in my work	3
2	high	4.02	Employees who render outstanding effort are rewarded	4
	high	3.76	Motivation and rewards	

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

Observation: Table (05) shows that the arithmetic means for incentives and rewards ranged between 3.11 and 4.42, with a general evaluation of "moderate to high."

**Table 06:** Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Internal Communication.

Rank	Grade	Arithmetic mean	Ferry	Paragraph number
4	Medium	3.11	The department provides the necessary information about its strategy and objectives	1
1	high	4.42	There is an effective communication system between the staff of the Directorate	2
2	high	3.72	I can easily contact my immediate supervisor in case I encounter a problem with my work	3

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

Observation: Table (06) shows that the arithmetic means for internal communication ranged between 2.49 and 3.41, with a general evaluation of "weak to moderate."

**Table 07:** Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Employee Satisfaction.

Rank	Grade	Arithmetic mean	Ferry	Paragraph number
1	Medium	3.41	I feel like the work I'm doing	1
5	Medium	2.52	I exploit my individual talents	2
7	Weak	2.49	I know my great achievements at work	3
2	Medium	3.12	I am treated as an individual and not a member of the group	4
3	Medium	2.79	I behave in ways that make me respected	5
4	Medium	2.55	He considers me a person with different needs, abilities and aspirations from others	6

6	high	3.50	I'm happy to spend the rest of my life in the system.	7
Medium		2.91	Employee satisfaction	

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

Observation: Table (07) shows that the arithmetic means for employee satisfaction ranged between 2.49 and 3.41, with a general evaluation of "weak to moderate."

#### 4-5-Testing The Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis, which examined the statistical significance of the relationship between internal marketing practices and employee satisfaction. The key findings are as follows:

**Table (08) :** Schedule of Transactions.

T significance level	Calculated T value	Typical coefficients	Atypical transactions		prototype
		Beta	Standard error	B	
0.642	-0.466				constant
0.025	3.102	0.002	0.134	0.280	Empowerment
0.000	4.690	0.291	0.168	0.399	Training Programs
0.000	4.675	0.453	0.156	0.390	Incentives and rewards
0.000	4.640	1.81	0.110	0.385	Intercom

**Source :** Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results using SPSS.

#### 4-6-Main Hypothesis

There is a statistically significant impact of internal marketing practices on employee satisfaction in Sonatrach'sLaghout Maintenance Department.

- Result: Accepted. The analysis demonstrated that internal marketing practices significantly influence employee satisfaction.

##### Sub-Hypotheses

##### 1. Empowerment

- There is a statistically significant effect of empowerment on employee satisfaction.

- Result: Accepted. The analysis showed a significant positive relationship between empowerment and employee satisfaction. The regression coefficient (B) was 0.280, indicating that an increase in empowerment leads to higher satisfaction.

##### 2. Training Programs

- There is a statistically significant effect of training programs on employee satisfaction.

- Result: Accepted. The results indicated a strong relationship, with a regression coefficient (B) of 0.399, demonstrating that effective training programs significantly enhance employee satisfaction.

##### 3. Incentives and Rewards

- There is a statistically significant effect of incentives and rewards on employee satisfaction.

- Result: Accepted. The regression coefficient (B) was 0.390, showing that appropriate incentives and rewards positively impact satisfaction.

##### 4. Internal Communication

- There is a statistically significant effect of internal communication on employee satisfaction.

- Result: Accepted. Internal communication showed a significant positive impact, with a regression coefficient (B) of 0.385.

## 5 Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, several conclusions were drawn:

- Gaps in Internal Marketing Practices

Sonatrach lacks a comprehensive and clear implementation of internal marketing practices, which affects employee satisfaction.

- **Centralized Decision-Making as a Limitation**

The organization's failure to delegate authority to employees and recognize their efforts contributes to dissatisfaction.

- **Insufficient Internal Communication**

The level of internal communication within the organization is inadequate, which limits collaboration and information sharing.

- **Moderate Attention to Training**

Training programs, though essential, are not prioritized or adequately provided to all employees.

- **Empowerment as a Key Success Factor**

Empowerment is identified as the most impactful dimension of internal marketing in driving employee satisfaction.

## **5-1-Results**

The analysis of the study produced several important conclusions regarding the internal marketing practices and their impact on employee satisfaction in the Maintenance Department of Sonatrach, Laghouat. These results highlight both strengths and weaknesses in the application of internal marketing practices:

- **Ambiguity in Applying Internal Marketing**

The study found that Sonatrach does not have a clear and explicit implementation of internal marketing practices. This conclusion was based on the neutral responses from employees regarding the organization's adoption of internal marketing components.

- **Centralized Decision-Making**

The organization demonstrates a lack of delegation of authority to employees. Decision-making is centralized at the administrative level, which limits employee autonomy and generates dissatisfaction. Employees also reported that their efforts are not sufficiently recognized, contributing to decreased job satisfaction.

- **Weak Internal Communication**

The study identified that internal communication within Sonatrach is modest and insufficient. This lack of communication hinders the flow of information and collaboration between employees and management.

- **Moderate Attention to Training Programs**

Although training is a critical element of internal marketing, it receives only moderate attention from the organization. Furthermore, only a small proportion of employees benefit from training opportunities.

- **Empowerment as a Key Factor**

Among the dimensions of internal marketing analyzed, empowerment was found to have the most significant impact on employee satisfaction. This suggests that employee empowerment should be prioritized to improve satisfaction levels.

## **5-2-Recommendations**

The study proposes several recommendations to improve the implementation of internal marketing practices at Sonatrach and enhance employee satisfaction:

- **Enhance Incentive Systems**

Motivation is a critical factor in improving employee performance and achieving organizational goals. Sonatrach should focus on developing a robust system of incentives and rewards to encourage employees and ensure job satisfaction.

- **Improve Internal Communication**

The organization should expand communication channels between employees and management. Encouraging teamwork and creating opportunities for collaboration can help streamline the flow of information, reduce delays, and foster a sense of unity.

- **Delegate Authority to Employees**

Empowering employees by delegating authority can build their confidence and enable them to solve problems independently without constantly relying on management. This also reduces employee turnover as it fosters loyalty and engagement with the organization.

- **Focus on Internal Marketing Strategies**



Greater attention should be given to applying internal marketing strategies to achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction. Improved satisfaction levels will help retain employees and enhance their productivity, especially in the face of increasing competition in the external market.

- Increase Training Opportunities

Sonatrach should conduct regular assessments of training needs and increase the availability of training programs. These programs will help employees better understand and implement internal marketing practices, ultimately improving the organization's overall performance.

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