

# Knowing your employees: The key to build an internal marketing-mix in French Clothing Retailing

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## ABSTRACT

“Everyone talks about building a relationship with your customers. I think you build one with your employees, first.”

Angela Ahrendts (former CEO of Burberry)

Theories have shown that using internal marketing could be beneficial for the duration of a company; indeed, by responding to the needs of their employees, companies manage to keep them involved and enhance their perceived efficiency. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine if the theory is applicable in a particular case or if it is just that, a theory. In order to do so, the research examined the application of an internal marketing strategy in a French clothing retailer and looked for ways to increase sales-assistants' perceived efficiency thanks to those actions.

**Nature / Scope:** the nature of this research is explanatory; that is to say, it aimed at studying a particular case so as to draw out more general conclusions. In order to do so, an analysis of the existing literature was undertaken so as to find as much articles as possible on the topics related to internal marketing and an analysis of a particular case was conducted.

**Method:** Regarding the adoption of the case study strategy, two methods were used: a qualitative and a quantitative research that aimed at determining how the theories are applied in practice.

**Contributions:** The research contributes to the literature as it fills a gap related to the application of internal marketing in France, and more precisely in clothing retail businesses. Plus, it brings a new theory under which the fact of setting-up an internal marketing mix is major for employees' involvement in a company and the duration of this company.

## INTRODUCTION

**2012:** the Eurofound highlighted the fact that employee's well-being is lower in France than in the rest of Europe.

**Problem:** companies are customer-oriented and not employee-oriented at all.

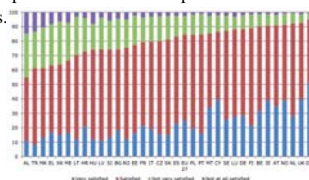
**Research Problem:**

How is internal marketing used in large French clothing retail businesses.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify the importance of well being in a French clothing retailer.
2. Establish a link between satisfaction at work and perceived efficiency in this company.
3. Estimate the influence of the Internal Marketing Department over the sales-assistants
4. Identify which marketing techniques can be useful to the Internal Marketing Department.
5. Develop a theory under which the said marketing techniques can improve the Department's perceived efficiency towards sales-assistants.

**Contributions:** fill the gap of the literature regarding the application of internal marketing in France and give a way-to-go for companies that want to implement internal marketing actions.



## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the research was made in accordance with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) research opinion.

The purpose of the research was **explanatory**: study a situation and examine variables.

The research used **interpretivism** as a philosophy: the focus was put on a specific case and on personal opinions.

The approach was **inductive**: the purpose was to study a specific case and draw a more general conclusion out of it.

The case study was based on a **mixed-method design**: a qualitative and a quantitative research were conducted. The qualitative research was based on an in-depth interview with the Internal Communication Manager of the company and the quantitative research relied on questionnaires distributed to the sales-assistants.

Regarding the researcher's limitations, the sample was limited to a region which represented a total of 15 stores to be questioned.

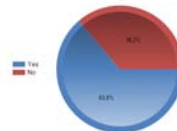
## RESULTS

The data gathered by the research permitted to meet the four objectives and draw the theory of objective #5.

First, the research showed that well-being is very important within the company; indeed, sales-assistants are impacted by their environment and act differently regarding their satisfaction. As a consequence, internal marketing is very important for them; when the Internal Marketing Department does not play its role, it has an impact on the employee's working environment and their satisfaction.

The responses given by the sales-assistants permitted to prove the existence of a relationship between their perceived efficiency and their satisfaction. Indeed, the research showed that the more people are satisfied by their job, the more they will be perceived at efficient.

The third point that was proven by the research is the influence that the Internal Marketing Department has over the employees. Most of the respondents were in agreement regarding the role of such a Department and the majority of them agreed on the fact that the Department in their company is efficient.



The last point that was highlighted by the case study are the techniques that could be useful when implementing an internal marketing strategy. According to the employees, it is important to encourage the communication between supervisors and subordinates, plus employees need to be trained so as to give their best; what's more, employees need to feel involved within the company.

	Effectifs	% Obs.
Training	30	43,5%
Meetings	30	43,5%
More communication	34	49,3%
More targeted Communication	19	27,5%
Other (Precise)	2	2,9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	

## DISCUSSION

The discussion was focused on two main ideas:

**The relationship between employee's satisfaction and their perceived efficiency**

The service profit chain model (Heskett et. Al.) was highlighted in the literature and needed to be tested in a practical context.



The research proved that the model is effective: the employees are more satisfied and loyal when internal marketing actions are implemented. Plus, they validated the idea that the Internal Marketing Department has an impact on their perceived efficiency.

**The existing role of Internal Marketing in French clothing retailers**

The research validated the definitions given in the literature. Indeed, in this case study, internal marketing is used so as to enhance the communication, broadcast the company's values and improve the working environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

Multiple conclusions from this research:

- Internal Marketing is major for companies that want to be more focused on their employees
- Multiple definitions of what internal marketing is + several components
- Existence of a relationship between internal marketing actions – employees satisfaction – customer loyalty – profitability of a company
- Internal Marketing should be seen more as a discipline in itself and marketing programs should integrate this important derivative of external marketing
- Need to do further research on this area: research on a larger scale or on other sectors.

## REFERENCES

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