Module 01 Written Assignment - Analysis of a Grocery Store

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This is the initial observation of a local  grocery store chain known as Winn Dixie located in Tampa, Florida at 2:30pm on Saturday January 11, 2020. In this observation  the observer spent over 45 minutes identifying traits, details and layouts as in reference to design principles of operations management. The observer also acted in part as a customer to obtain a full customer experience.

The observer identified many various activities from stocking shelves, managerial, cashiers, and other departmental functions such as the deli, produce, bakery and pharmacy. From this,  the observer was able to observe and recognize processes and systems of the store, it’s layout, employees, and management. To evaluate and give an unbiased determination and recommendations or suggestive ideas. Believed to make the grocery store operations possibly  more efficient with the purpose of retaining more customers.

To clarify the observation accurately a description acclimatization to depict the store location and cardinal headings are required. A simple illustration is provided below. The building storefront faces do-east with two initial entry points also facing east upon entry from the parking lot. There were two entry points on the north and south end of the face of the building. The north entry point is the access point for the observers entry and the south entry point was used for the observer exiting the facility with regard for this observation.

Upon initial entry of the grocery store from the north entry point. The initial layout was observed finding that to the right of entering customer and very organized stash of grocery carts near the front door. This stash of carts caused a  bottle neck from entering customers. Initially having to wait behind other entering customers to pull a cart from the jumbled mess of disorganization. This is an unwelcoming experience and minor inconvenience but did cause an unwelcoming sense for that brief time. The observer timed it took 27.3 seconds to obtain a cart to start grocery shopping.

The observer also recognized that directly across from this stash of disorganized cluttered carts. That is was divided by a 4’-5’ shelving unit which was directly across from the main cashier registers on the other side of the shelving unit. The registers where centered near the entry and exit point. This also caused delay from shoppers who had just checked out and where leaving. Having to wait and maneuver their carts from those just entering the store. Trying to pull a cart out to begin their shopping journey from both exits. The observer did not time these delays, but they were apparent.

To the left direction (due north) upon entering was an empty space estimated 10’ x 10’ and then 8 horizontal rows of shelves in parallel to what was observed as the pharmacy section. Which resided a counter and area at the north end of the facility. This entire section was due north in parallel to the 12 cashier stations. Directly across from the center cashier stations was a customer service desk.

The observer also noticed that the cash registers seems to be very old and worn as did the 3 old black dirty carpeted mats in the entry and exit access. The shopping carts and corridor placement were like this on both entry points. This in itself did not seem too inviting.

After the observer finally entered past the registers there was on main aisle behind the registers which went from north to south spanning the length of the store. With 18 horizontal aisle and finally back row which spanned the length of the store. On the south end of the store past the last aisle there is a bakery located in the front of the store and a produce section located near the back.

The observer went to the starting aisle and proceeded to go left \*(due-north) and start his way from the last aisle going clockwise around the perimeter of the store. This last aisle was a refrigerated section of frozen foods where he started. He observed 3 carts in this aisle with employees stocking groceries. This caused some delays during the observer’s experience. During this time there were also 8 other employees throughout 7 other aisle of store goods stocking shelves as well.

 The management of organization of goods in the aisle seemed to be well planned. The last 2 aisles were frozen foods. After there were household products, pet products, and consumer products such as magazines and birthday card. Then the aisle resumed with having perishable food items and other food items till the last 2 aisles on the south end which had water, soda, soft drinks, juice and other liquids.

The very back aisles was also all refrigerated  until the last 4 aisles near the south end which across resided the deli section. Then the produce section took up a ¼ end of the rear corner south section which was very open and welcoming with bright green and colorful vegetables that was very appealing. Then to the next section near the front south end of the store which was a bakery. Which had a service counter against the south wall and was very open and appealing.

Standing in the checkout only 3 registers with cashiers where checking people out and only 1 employee bagging groceries for all 3 registers. These were the first 3 cashier registers near the same entry point the observer came in. At the service counter there were  4 employees who were not assisting with any customers at the counter. Each cashier line had about 3-6 customers checking out. This experience and process was very daunting.

The observer noted that the entry into the store and check out  where very slow. Also, the customer checkout experience was very slow. Finding the right goods throughout the store was very easy and made for a fast and relatively easy experience.

The observer’s recommendation based off the observations would to reallocate the positing of the carts upon both entry to the opposite sides in which they now reside. Also, to emphasize the importance of keeping the carts  accessible and uncluttered. This could have been easily managed by one of the four employees standing behind the service counter.

There are empty spaces on each side with maybe a few small displays that could be easily moved. If the carts were stored in these areas it would separate the customers coming into the shop between the ones leaving the cash register as well. Making a more seamless and welcoming experience for those both entering the facility and leaving.

The Observer also like to recommend  that groceries being stocked would be done at an hour in which there was less traffic this would ensure a faster grocery shopping experience. That if the operational cashier stations spread between closed stations. Instead of being cluttered together with three to six people with full grocery carts. Would potentially help make shopping faster for those passing in those customers passing in those aisles.

Observer recommends that the employees behind the management desk be enticed to take a little bit of initiative and helping the fellow cashiers when they are so backed up. This implies good morale which is always good for customer retention and helping customers want to return to a place that is not unorganized, chaotic, and rundown. Simply showing this initiative is seen by the customers during check out and entry. Showing they care about the customers that they're serving to a higher extent. This could establish a president for more return customers.

These simple changes could be very productive and producing more revenue for the store essentially allowing them to extend their budget to updating cash registers, hiring more employees, and replacing old worn-out fixtures. Also, give a more welcoming updated appeal to the storefront and the stores first impression for new customers. Allowing customers to quickly get in and out to return to their daily lives seamlessly.

