Facilitation and support: Where it was unlikely that employees would be accepting of the proposed change, for example in a redundancy situation, change managers must ensure humane treatment to help the employee come to terms with the implications of change.

Negotiation and agreement: Where resistance was a result of a specific sticking point, change managers may wish to amend their plans to gain agreement and buy-in.

Manipulation and cooption: When time is short or where confidentiality is paramount, for example, it may be necessary to limit the flow of information and therefore the ability of opposing factions to mount any resistance to the change.

Explicit or implicit coercion: In some instances it may be necessary to force through an unpopular change and rebuild support after the event. Many hospitality managers adopt this 'business process engineering' approach. That is, change decisions are made and implemented swiftly. Disgruntled employees often quit their jobs but are soon replaced by new recruits particularly where labor supply outstrips demand. Moreover, this is a typical scenario in mid-quality hotels where much operation work has been deskilled.

Finally, it is important throughout the change process to consider the ethical dimensions of change management. Many change programs are a result of a desire to improve customer service, service quality or overall organizational performance. To achieve this, many change models stress the importance of alignment of organizational and individual goals and values. In reality, this may mean the acceptance of negative outcomes for the individual and the sublimation of considerable personal stress and anxiety into increased performance and attitude change. It is therefore vital that those who are leading a change program have excellent interpersonal and leadership skills to support employees during the transition period.

References


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Characteristics of service

Increasingly, products from the hospitality industry are becoming more difficult to differentiate. Operators are clever and quick to duplicate the tangible efforts of their competition. The similarities in the menu variety at Applebee’s and Chili’s or the guestrooms at Hawthorne Suites and Spring Hill Suites or the travel experience purchased through Expedia and Travelocity are all examples of this phenomenon. Consequently, the marketplace is left with homogeneity of the physical product being offered. To a greater extent, hospitality organizations must recognize service characteristics (intangibles) that enable them to differentiate their products (tangibles) in the marketplace to sustain long-term success. Presented here are the characteristics that are unique to the production and delivery of services by hospitality firms where success is achieved through differentiation from their competition.

The following are 13 distinguishable characteristics of service. To achieve world-class service, it is important for hospitality professionals to understand how these characteristics interact with their service delivery system so they can focus on factors that are salient to their customers.

Service is an experience for the customer

The interaction between the customer and the service provider will leave an impression on the customer. The effect of the interaction between the service provider and the customer will either enhance or detract from the customer’s satisfaction of the tangible product.
Service is a performance by an employee or product

An employee, the product, or a mechanical device can provide the service transaction to the customer and because the service is intangible it can be transmitted in multiple ways. The lack of consideration of the customer’s perspective will often lead to a less than satisfactory outcome (Powers and Barrows, 1999).

When service is delivered, the guest and service provider are both part of the transaction

Services purchased by customers often involve the interaction between the service provider and the customer. Typically, the transaction requires the customer to be a participant in the experience (Shea, 2001).

Service quality is difficult to control and evaluate

Often the service transaction occurs without close supervision thus making it difficult to control the service provider’s actions. Since there are no physical remains of the service once it has been delivered, evaluating its quality requires receiving feedback from the customer. To ensure that the service is consistent requires a service commitment from the organization that includes consistent service training for employees as well as continual feedback from customers.

The customer and the organization often measure quality of service differently

Consumers often view service quality as the effectiveness of the service, whereas organizations view service quality as the efficiency with which it is produced. Consumers value reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy of the services being delivered. Organizations look for productivity, costs, and consistency. Often the method of evaluating quality of services between the consumer and the organization are not congruent.

When service is delivered, there can be no recall of the guest’s experience

There is an aspect of time that is associated with the delivery of service. Additionally, since service is the intangible part of the organization’s output there are no opportunities for the organization to recall and evaluate the quality of the service delivered. This requires management to develop service providers that have the ability to deliver service consistently under different and changing environments (Powers and Barrows, 1999).

Estimating the cost of service delivery is difficult

Unlike the production of tangible goods, it is difficult for hospitality organizations to quantify specific costs associated to the delivery of services. This is because the delivery of services often spans a variety of tangible products being offered concurrently. This challenge is exacerbated by the nominal expense of selling an additional unit of service and the extreme variability of demand (Lovelock, 1996).

Excess production of service cannot be placed in inventory

Economies of scale cannot be realized in the production of services. Since demand fluctuates and production cannot be stockpiled, hospitality service providers are not able to take advantage of consistent and steady production that result in a cost reduction associated with the manufacturing of tangible products.

Service delivery and demand can be individually customized

Since service production and consumption are simultaneous, hospitality organizations have great latitude to customize the service being delivered. Offering varying levels and types of services to the consumer can lead to a better match of their needs while increasing opportunities to raise revenue potential.
Successful service delivery can be achieved with different viewpoints

The management of the service philosophy within hospitality can be structured as a series of tasks that must be delivered without variation or as a strategy that is expected to focus on the customer's need and will vary between customers and service providers (Powers and Barrows, 1999).

Service as a task

The delivery of service is viewed as a series of tasks that can be scripted and given to the employees through training. In this viewpoint of service, employees are assumed to always follow the delivery of service in a consistent manner. The rationale for this approach is to eliminate opportunities for variation among the service providers and offer ease in evaluating employee performance.

Service as a strategy

Organizations who adopt this viewpoint are less concerned that employees follow a scripted pattern of the delivery of the service. Rather, employees are hired because of their abilities and personalities, and are empowered to provide service that meets the needs and expectations of the customer. It is expected that the service delivery may vary within and among employees. Empowering employees to make the right decisions will lead to service that meets or exceeds the needs and expectations of customers.

Service is often provided as a value added to a physical product

In most hospitality products the services are provided to customers as an added value or incentive to purchase the physical product. Receiving the service provided in a restaurant, on an airplane, renting a car would have no value if they did not accompany a meal, the airplane or automobile respectively.

Service has an aspect of time

Often, the delivery of service adds value to the physical product as noted above, therefore, service must be delivered at the time and speed that is appropriate to the consumption or delivery of the physical product. However, hospitality organizations can add value to the service proposition by varying the time the service is available so that it better meets the needs of the customer, such as restaurants having extended hours or brunches during weekends and holidays (Lovelock, 1996).

When purchasing services there is limited or no ownership

When purchasing services from a hospitality organization, the purchaser has limited or no ownership of the service provided. Once the service transaction is complete, there is little or no ability to enjoy the use of the service again in the future.

Managing the service delivery in any hospitality organization is difficult but often proves to be the only sustainable competitive advantage available to the business in a hyper-competitive marketplace. Failure to understand these characteristics of service will lead to a failure to recognize and meet the needs of the consumer.

References


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Check-out

This is the last stage of the guest cycle and is one of the last contacts that a guest has with the