

Characteristics that affect the design of marketing programs assignment

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Service possesses several unique characteristics that often have a significant impact on marketing program development. The four distinctive characteristics that greatly affect the design of marketing programs are intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability. Intangibility Service cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard, or smelled so it is difficult for clients to tell in advance what they will be getting. For example, hotels that promise a good night's sleep to their guests cannot actually show this service in a tangible way.

Also the hotel must somehow describe to the consumer how a stay at the hotel will leave them feeling well rested and ready to begin a new day. To reduce uncertainty, the consumers will look for evidence of quality. They will draw inferences about quality from the place, people, equipment, communication materials, symbols, and price that they see. Therefore, it is important for the hotel to "manage the evidence," to "tangibilize the intangible." For example, as Raffles Hotel is actually selling an idea or experience, it can demonstrate their service quality through physical evidence and presentation.

It can develop a look and style of dealing with customers that realize its intended customer value proposition, whether it is cleanliness, speed, or some other benefit. Inseparability Services are typically produced and consumed simultaneously. Because the client is present as the service is produced, provider-client interaction is a special feature of service marketing. For example, when a meal is ordered in one of the renowned restaurants in Raffles Hotel, the waiting and delivery of the meal, the service

provided by the waiter, are all apart of the service production process and is inseparable.

The staffs in a restaurant are as apart of the process as well as the quality of food provided. The hotel can learn to work in groups and group counseling may be offered. The hotel staffs work faster, spending less time with each consumer and seeing more consumers. The hotel can train more staffs and built up consumer confidence. Variability Services are highly variable because they depend on who provides them and when and where they are provided. There are 3 steps that can be taken to increase quality control. Firstly invest in good hiring and training procedures.

Recruiting the right employees for the hotel and providing them with excellent training is crucial. Secondly standardize the service-performance process throughout the organization. This is done by preparing a service blueprint that depicts events and processes in a flowchart, with the objective of recognizing potential fail points. Thirdly monitor customer satisfaction. The hotel can employ suggestions and complaint systems and customer survey to improve the quality of its service. Perishability Services are perishable and markets for most services fluctuate either by season, days, or time of the day.

Services last a specific time and cannot be stored like a product for later use. When demand fluctuates, service firms have problems. For example, when hotel rooms are vacant, business is lost forever. Strategies can produce a better match between demand and supply in a service business. On the demand side, differential pricing will shift some of the demand from peak to

off-peak periods. Complementary services can be developed to provide alternatives to waiting guests, such as cocktail lounges in hotels. Reservation systems are a way to manage the demand level for hotels.

On the supply side, part-time employees can be hired to serve peak demand in the restaurants of the hotel. Peak-time efficiency can be introduced so that employees perform only essential tasks during peak periods. Q Gap 1 - Gap between consumer expectation and management perception:

Management does not always correctly perceive what consumers want. For example, the hotel management may think that the consumers want better “service materials” such as brochures and pamphlets but from the consumer’s point of view, the appearance and neatness of the staff is of greater importance.

Gap 2 - Gap between management perception and service-quality specification: Management might correctly perceive customers’ wants but not set a performance standard. For example, the managers of Raffles Hotel may tell the staffs to provide “fast” service without specifying it in minutes.

Gap 3 - Gap between service-quality specifications and service delivery: Personal might be poorly trained, or incapable or unwilling to meet the standards; or they may be held to conflicting standards, such as taking time to listen to customers and serving them fast.

Gap 4 - Gap between service delivery and external communication: Consumer expectations are affected by statements made by company representatives and ads. For example if the brochure of Raffles Hotel shows a luxurious room, but when the consumer arrives and finds the room to be

cheap and tacky-looking, external communications have distorted the consumer's expectations. Gap 5 - Gap between perceived service and expected service: This gap occurs when the consumer misperceives the service quality. Gap 5 results from the combination of gap 1 to gap 4. As a result, gap 5 can only be influenced indirectly by management: by changing the gaps 1 to 4.