

# Problems and strategies in services marketing

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



This article compares problems and strategies cited in the services marketing literature with those reported by actual service suppliers in a study conducted by the authors. Discussion centers on several broad themes that emerge from this comparison and on guidelines for future work in services marketing. Basic assumptions pervade the growing body of literature on services marketing.

The first holds that a number of unique characteristics— notably intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability— separate services from tangible goods. The second assumption maintains that these characteristics pose vexing problems for services marketers that are not faced by goods marketers. The third and final assumption holds that services marketing problems require services marketing solutions— that strategies developed from experience in goods marketing are often insufficient.

The purposes of this article are: (1) to offer a conceptual framework summarizing the unique characteristics of services, the problems associated with these characteristics, and the strategies suggested as appropriate to overcome the problems; (2) to report the findings of a national survey of managers of service firms concerning the problems they face and the marketing strategies they use to overcome them; (3) to " THREE Authors A. Estimate is Assistant Professor of Marketing, A. Parasuraman is Associate Professor of Marketing, and Leonard L Berry is Professor of Marketing, Texas A&M University.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by Gregory Pupa and four anonymous reviewers. Volvo. 48 (spring %rim, 33-46. Compare the problems and strategies cited in the literature with those reported by managers of services firms; and (4) to offer recommendations for the development of services marketing thought. Literature on Services Marketing The rationale for a separate treatment of services marketing centers on the existence of a number of characteristics of services which are consistently cited in the literature: intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and permissibility.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the references documenting these differences. The fundamental difference universally cited by authors (e. G. , Battens 1977; Berry 1980; Lovelace 1981; Earthmen 1966, 1974; Choctaws AAA) is intangibility. Because services are performances, rather than objects, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted, or touched in the same manner in which goods can be sensed. Intangibility, according to Battens (1979) is the critical goods-services distinction from which all other differences emerge.