

Requisites to be in Pursuit of Service Excellence

Dr.. Abid Yunus Salati

*Associate Professor, School of Commerce and Management
Sanjay Ghodawat University,*

ABSTRACT

Today, with ever-increasing focus on customers, companies are taking a service oriented approach to customer value management.

Organizations today are interested in providing top quality customer service to clients. Over 20 billion customer satisfaction surveys are conducted on an annual basis around the world in an attempt to understand what customers want from their experience and how well they perform against delivering on those expectations.

Understanding client needs is a prerequisite for delivering superior service. Customers will compare their perceptions of the service against their expectations when judging the quality of an organization's service delivery.

Investing in voice of the customer surveys and analytics is never a poor investment. Organizations must know who their clients are, what they experience now, and what they want from future service experiences. In addition, the stability of those expectations and how quickly they change over time or vary across service situations and client groups must also be examined.

This paper is an attempt to bring to fore the essentials for Service Excellence viz. Service failure recovery, Service employee empowerment, Service delivery, Service technology, and last but not the least service training and development.

KEYWORDS

Service excellence, Service failure recovery, Service delivery, Service Employee Empowerment, Service Training and Development.

INTRODUCTION

“SERVICE EXCELLENCE IS A MATTER OF BEING PASSIONATE ABOUT DOING INSIGNIFICANT THINGS IN A SIGNIFICANT MANNER.”

Improving performance in service delivery and responsiveness to the customers has become a source of competitive advantage in many industry and service sectors.

It is unfortunate that several organizations in India in various sectors like hospitality, brokerage, insurance, higher education, medical care and public services are far from above mentioned quality components for excellence. Some of the reasons seen are: Poorly designed processes, ill trained and overworked staff with unachievable targets and general lack of service technology. Similar, is the situation in after sales service of manufactured goods and call-center systems in India that need to be addressed seriously?

In services as well as manufactured goods it is the value delivery and communication of this value proposition to customer is very important for growth and profitability. It would always be rewarding for organizations to develop the evaluation criteria by which customer can judge and appreciate the value. This is one area, which needs well-designed systems and communication with customer. In multi-ethnic, multi religion and multi lingual society like

in India it is quite daunting and challenging for creating such components of service excellence.

“EXCELLENCE IS NOT AN ACTION BUT A HABIT”

Excellence can be defined as the quality or state of being outstanding or superior since customer have rising threshold of satisfaction levels and hence excellence.

Excellence will deliver memorable personal experiences including customer delight significantly beyond expectation of customer, positively shocking, unexpected and random.

Service excellence is being increasingly used to create customer value that helps businesses to sustain profitable growth.

What is important is first, to believe genuinely in customer delight and service as a goal of organization, which is only possible by Top management support, and then go on and train and empower employees' right from front line and beyond. choice of right attitude employees is must backed by database and technology systems.

The key control points in service chain right from first contact point of a customer to after sales guarantee have to be identified and the systems of monitoring and improvements around them has to be built for leading to service quality and delight.

Since it is a lot difficult to even out pricing in tailored need for services products and customer is not able to find worth of the service product reliability and efficiency of service providers (Services Triangle – Valerie, et al) is vital for ensuring service excellence.

5S' FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE:

The relationship between a company and its customers' needs to be mutually rewarding and fruitful. It is however, not an easy task for companies to maintain such a relationship for long. All customers are not alike and organizations cannot afford to maintain a relationship with all of them. They should choose the right customers and then invest in the relationship. So before investing in customer relationship, Organizations need to keep track of the following ingredients in order to build and develop successful customer value:

1. Service training and development
2. Service employee empowerment
3. Service failure recovery
4. Service technology
5. Service delivery process

Few ingredients in the formula for service excellence

SERVICE EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Employee represent the organization to the customers .if these employees are not given training in how to go about face to face customer contact, the entire marketing effort may not prove to be effective. So to provide quality service, employees need ongoing training in the necessary skills and knowledge and in the process or interpersonal skills. Most organizations are quite conscious of and relatively effective at training employees in technical skills. These skills may be taught through formal education, as in case at McDonald's Hamburger University which trains McDonald's managers from all over the world.

At the same time service employees also need training in interpersonal skills that allow them to provide courteous, caring, responsive, and empathetic service. Training in interactive skills helps employees develop listening, problem solving, communication skills.

Even the back office staff should be trained for service skill. Managers, supervisors, and support staff are also trained the same way, as providers understand that contact employees will deliver quality service to customers only when they experience the same values and behaviors from their supervisors. And moreover organizations should understand that training is not only for new employees; it must be an ongoing process for sharing, learning and further improvement.

SERVICE EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

If you sincerely believe that “the customer is king,” the second most important person in this kingdom must be the one who has a direct interaction on a daily basis with the one who is king. - Michel Bon, CEO of France Telecom If you get everybody in the company involved in customer service, not only are they ‘feeling the customer’ but they’re also getting for what’s not working. Penny hands comb Empowerment means giving employees the desire, skills, tools, and authority to serve the customer (Eithmal and Bitner). Let’s understand this with a case:

- ❖ Every employee is empowered in Ritz Carlton Hotel to do the following to satisfy a customer:
- ❖ Move heaven and earth to satisfy a customer;
- ❖ Contact appropriate employees to help resolve a problem swiftly (lateral service concept);
- ❖ Spend up to \$ 2,000 to satisfy a customer;
- ❖ Decide the acceptability of products and services;
- ❖ Decide the business terms of sales
- ❖ Become involved in setting the plans for their work area; and
- ❖ Speak with anyone regarding any problem.

That is employee empowerment. Empowering your employees also shows them that you believe them to do the right thing. This in turn has a positive energy on employee performance. The higher the service employee morale, the better service they will provide to your customers.

Employee empowerment not only improve better services to the customer but at the same time increases employees’ motivation, job satisfaction, and loyalty to their companies, and have a positive impact on the lower level. Another benefit is that if your contact employee can resolve the complaint, then middle management doesn’t have to occupy their time doing it.

SERVICE FAILURE RECOVERY

The second ingredient to achieve service excellence is service failure recovery. Companies must bring together with one reality. Things can go wrong. Due to a variety of reasons, service experience can vary in quality. When things go wrong? The comeback to situations of failure can take two forms: take no notice of failure and do nothing or identify failure and be ready to recover from it.

The process of getting back into shape or regaining balance is called recovery. In the context of service excellence when service delivery is not right the first time, firms can choose to try the second time. For instance Dominos promises pizza delivery within thirty minutes. But when promise is not kept and delivery is delayed due to unforeseen events, pizzas are given free to compensate for the disappointment.

SERVICE TECHNOLOGY

The third ingredient for service excellence is service technology service organizations need to ensure that the technology should be that customer understands it and fits well into the requirements of service encounters .i.e., service consumer's .that the customer should feels at ease while using the technology interface. If the customers feel that a system is too complicated or feel insecure, they will avoid the purchase or find other ways. And at the same time, it is also important that employees are equipped with suitable tools and technology that enhance their ability to serve the customer. Reliability of technology is another linked issue. How frequently technologies fail to perform? What substitute arrangements are available? Frequent service failure interferes with employees' ability to perform and satisfy the customers. This can be seen at ticketing machines.

SERVICE DELIVERY PROCESS

This ingredient plays a very important role in the achievement of service excellence. A service customer often consumes a total service experience rather than some limited end – of-process output. This totality is often conveyed through a service very process .the importance of service delivery process is that it assures service, availability and consistent quality that means service excellence.

Without sound delivery process, managing service requirement is extremely difficult. service cannot be inventoried; therefore, it becomes essential to find out ways and means to handle peak load to optimize varied customer needs with different levels . so, stack gave a much simplified version and described the 'process' in three stages. First, a process can be broken down in logical steps to facilitate analysis and control. Second there are more than one available options of processes in which output may differ. Finally, each system includes the concept of deviation or tolerance standards in recognition that the processes are 'real time' phenomena that do not conform perfectly to any model or description, but function within a norm.

CONCLUSION

Service excellence, thus, emerges as the key to create customer value and viability for an organization in a highly competitive market scenario the imperatives and challenges before organization are many and varied, and it is only by innovating constantly and keeping abreast certain, backed up by sound strategies and an appropriate mix of ingredients discussed above, that an organization can hope to best its larger counterparts.

REFERENCES

- Christopher Lovelock, "Services marketing people, technology, strategy"
- Robert Spector, Patrick D. McCarthy, "The Nordstrom way to customer service excellence"
- Theo Gilbert Jamison, "The six principles of service excellence"
- Lytle, Richard S, 10 elements of service Excellence, Texas Banking
- www.hbr.edu
- www.businessstandard.com
- marketingprofs.com
- www.netmba.com
- www.wikipedia.com