



BOOK REVIEW

Service Marketing Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm

Valarie A. Zeithamal, Mary Jo Bitner

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Book Reviewer:

Bharat Bhushan Sharma

Student of Pre Ph.D. Course Work in Commerce, Meerut College, Meerut (U. P.), India

E-mail: bharat237@gmail.com

The book "Service Marketing Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm" is a highly research oriented book. It helps us to understand the marketing of services. As we know that services marketing is totally different with the marketing of goods. It's provides a yardstick for understand the marketing of services and it's vital role that services play in the economy and its future.

This book is divided into Six Parts. Part one, deals with focus on the customer. Part Two deals with listening TC customer requirements. Part Three deals with aligning strategy, service design, and Strategy Part Four deals with Delivering and performing service Promises. Part five deals with managing service Promises. Part six deals with financial and economic effect. The matter spreaded in above six Parts has been explained in Eighteen chapters The review of these chapters is as follows:

CHAPTER 1: SERVICE DELIVERY

The author in this chapter discusses about the services as well as new ways to deliver service. Service marketing is totally different with marketing of good in term of tangible, in term of perish ability and heterogeneity etc. The technology is changed the face of customer Services, the internet is also providing services. To understand the services marketing it is also need to understand or study the marketing mix for service Product, place promotion, price, people physical evidence and process.

**Corresponding Author*

CHAPTER 2: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN SERVICES

The second chapter consist with the consumer Behaviour for the consumption or utilization of services. First we have to focus on recognition of needs of the customers and information search than evaluation of alternatives, go for purchase and assumption. In India, we know that there are number of customers which affected the behaviour of consumer.

CHAPTER 3: CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE

The book also covers the different types of expectations for service performance. Authors have also written about most important current issues surrounding customer expectations. This chapter discusses that customers hold different types of service expectations: (1) Desired service, which denotes what customers want (2) adequate service, what customers are willing to accept and (3) predicted service, what customers believe they are likely to get.

CHAPTER 4: CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE

One of the author discusses customer perceptions of service by introducing two critical concepts: customer Satisfaction and service quality. After go through the chapter we found that author gave more emphasize over the customer Satisfaction. The second most important purpose of the chapter was 'Moments of truth', as the foundations for both satisfaction and quality. Finally, the authors also described strategies of firms used to enhance customer perceptions of service quality and increase customer satisfaction

CHAPTER 5: UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS THROUGH MARKETING

The authors have highlighted the importance of marketing research as well as the role of marketing research in understanding customers perceptions and expectation. Important topics in researching service including developing research objectives and presenting data. Marketing research is very helpful to fulfil the gap between customer expectation and company standard.

CHAPTER: 6: BUILDING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

In this chapter authors focused on benefits through long-term relationship with the customers. To maintain long-run relationship it has to follow once important relationship strategies like effective work on Segmentation to identify who the organization wants to have relationship, regular development of services and up to date customer database. This chapter also focused on the concept like "The customer is not always right," because long-term relationship with the customer can be extremely profitable, firm should not attempt to build relationship with just for the time being with any customer.

CHAPTER 7: SERVICE RECOVERY

The chapter consists with the response of the organization or step taken by the organization in response to a service failure. The Author also discussed the causes of service failure like delivered late or too slowly, unavailability of service, poorly executed and employee may be rude etc. This chapter also discussed the importance of an effective service recovery strategy for enhance the positivity among the customers.

In this chapter authors also discussed about the response of customers to service failure and why some complain while other do not. Some strategies for service recovery are as-(1) right time delivery, (2) encouraging complaints (3) quick response and chapter ended with service quarantines as a tool used by many firms.

CHAPTER 8: SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

The authors have highlighted, the challenged inherent in service design because services are intangible and heterogeneity in nature so, develop a service is very complex and challenging. The new service development process has presented in the chapter includes nine stages, starts form Business strategy development or review and ends with post introduction evaluation of new service.

Service Blue print is useful technique in the new service development process. A Blue print can make a complex and intangible service as visual depiction at all level. A new Service Development Quality Function Development (QFD) was introduced as another tool for linking customer requirements to internal elements of service design.

CHAPTER 9: CUSTOMER – DEFINED SERVICE STANDARDS

The chapter consists of discrepancy between perception of customer expectation and the standards they set to deliver to these expectations. The authors also discussed some necessary factors for appropriate service standers as standardization of service behaviour and actions. The chapter also defined the process for development of customer defined standards. Unless the operations, standards are defined by properties of customer

CHAPTER 10: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AND THE SERVICES CAPE

The Chapter focused of Physical evidence in forming customer and employee perceptions. Since services are intangible and they are often produced and consumed at the same time. It is very difficult to compare and evaluate before their purchase. It helps to customer to setting their expectations before purchase.

Primarily, chapter focused on the services cape-physical surroundings or physical facility where the service produced, delivered and consumed. This chapter provides the framework for services cape to understand the behavior of customer and employee. It is very crucial for firm to think strategically about the management of the tangible evidence of service, physical evidence can be part of an effective delivery of service.

CHAPTER 11: EMPLOYEES’ ROLES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The author has focused on human resource development for delivery of service. Many services delivered by people to people in real time. Employee faced the customer and tried to satisfying them by delivering expected serviced. Authors also focused on understanding of the importance of service employee and the nature of their rules in the organization. The Chapter focused on Develop people to deliver service Quality by focusing on them a firm can move towards a true service culture.

CHAPTER; 12: CUSTOMERS ROLES IN SERVICE DELIVERY

This chapter consists the role of customer in service delivery as the input of the customer is very important for the organizations productivity. The chapter also focused on developing the strategies to enhance the customer participation. The service manager faced this issue because their customer are often present and active partners in production of service.

CHAPTER 13: DELIVERING SERVICE THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES AND ELECTRONIC CHANNELS

The Chapter highlights the benefits and challenges of delivering service through intermediaries. Because service is intangible and perishable, inventories not exist, making warehouses is dispensable, so many channels available to goods produced are not feasible for service firms

chapter described the four forms of distribution in service as franchises agents, brokers and electronic channels , though these channels firm delivered the services Successfully.

CHAPTER 14: MANAGING DEMAND AND CAPACITY

The chapter helps to understand the issues of managing supply and demand in capability. The chapter presented number of strategies for matching supply and demand. The basic strategies consist two heads demand strategies and supply strategies. In services, it is very complex situation to manage the demand and supply because inventories are not there. The last section of chapter discussed about situation, where it is not possible to align supply and demand strategies for effectively managing through waiting lines.

CHAPTER 15: INTEGRATED SERVICES MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

This chapter consists with delivery of service and external communication which had a strong effect on customer perception of service quality. The chapter also helpful to understand the role of integrated service marketing communications. The authors discussed the problems in marketing communication and provided the four strategies for overcome those problems (1) Managing service promise (2) Managing customer expectations (3) Improving customer education, (4) Managing internal marketing communication. By discussed the difficulty of exceeding expectation of customer on regular basis and recommended ways that companies can avoid problems in promising to delight customers.

CHAPTER 16: PRICING OF SERVICES

The authors have focused on the prices of services which are differ from the price of goods. The authors discussed three major ways which showed the difference between the price of goods and price of services (1) Monetary price is not only relevant price for service customer (2) Price is important for quality in services (3) customers have reference for services. The chapter also discussed common pricing strategies like -cost based, competition and demand based. The chapter also discussed about customer perceptions of value and suggested appropriate pricing strategies, which meet with the customer definition.

CHAPTER 17: THE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECT OF SERVICE

The Chapter highlights the relationship between service and profitability. The chapter used a conceptual framework to link all the variables:

(1) The direct relationship between service and profit (2) offensive marketing effects of service for more better customers, (3) Defensive marketing effects of service on profits (4) Perceptions of service, Behavioral intentions, and profits, and (5) the key drives of service quality, customer retention and profits. The chapter closed by discussion of Balance performance score card for corporate or company performance measurement.

CHAPTER 18: THE INTEGRATED GAPS MODEL OF SERVICE QUALITY

The chapter presented the integrated gaps model of service quality framework for understanding and important in service quality. Effective service marketing is a complex task, to remove the gap between customer expectation and perception a company need to end this gap in order to maintain long-term relationship by satisfying their customers. To end this gap the model suggests that four other gaps need to be filled up.

Gap 1: Not knowing what customer expect.

Gap 2: Not selecting the right service design and standards.

Gap 3: Not delivering to service standards.

Gap 4: Not matching performance to promise.

Overall, Valarie A. Zeithaml and Mary Jo Bitner's book on Service Marketing is good book. The book is extremely helpful to understand the ever-growing importance of services and the unique challenges faced by managers of services. Had the book taken into account all these components, It would become a more comprehensive guide for both students and business profession also to understand the rapidly growing the business of services.