

Customers' Roles in Service Delivery

- The Importance of Customers in Service Cocreation and Delivery
- Customers' Roles
- Self-Service Technologies—The Ultimate in Customer Participation
- Strategies for Enhancing Customer Participation

Objectives for Chapter 13: Customers' Roles in Service Delivery

- Illustrate the importance of customers in successful service delivery and cocreation of service experiences.
- Discuss the variety of roles that service customers play: productive resources for the organization, contributors to quality and satisfaction, competitors.
- Explain strategies for involving service customers effectively to increase satisfaction, quality, and productivity.

Levels of Customer Participation across Different Services

TABLE 13.1 Levels of Customer Participation across Different Services

Source: Adapted from A. R. Hubbert, "Customer Co-Creation of Service Outcomes: Effects of Locus of Causality Attributions," doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 1995.

Low: Consumer Presence Required during Service Delivery	Moderate: Consumer Inputs Required for Service Creation	High: Customer Cocreates the Service
Products are standardized.	Client inputs (information, materials) customize a standard service.	Active client participation guides the customized service.
Service is provided regardless of any individual purchase.	Provision of service requires customer purchase.	Service cannot be created apart from the customer's purchase and active participation.
Payment may be the only required customer input.	Customer inputs are necessary for an adequate outcome, but the service firm provides the service.	Customer inputs, choices, and actions cocreate the outcome.
Consumer Examples		
Airline travel	Haircut	Marriage counseling
Motel stay	Annual physical exam	Personal training
Fast-food restaurant	Full-service restaurant	Weight reduction program
		Major illness or surgery
Business-to-Business Customer Examples		
Uniform cleaning service	Agency-created, advertising campaign	Management consulting
Pest control	Payroll service	Executive management seminar
Interior greenery maintenance service	Freight transportation	Installation of computer network

How Customers Widen the Service Performance Gap

- Lack of understanding of their roles
- Not being willing or able to perform their roles
- No rewards for “good performance”
- Interfering with other customers
- Incompatible market segments

Importance of Other (“Fellow”) Customers in Service Delivery

- Other customers can detract from satisfaction:
 - disruptive behaviors
 - overly demanding behaviors
 - excessive crowding
 - incompatible needs
- Other customers can enhance satisfaction:
 - mere presence
 - socialization/friendships
 - roles: assistants, teachers, supporters, mentors

Customer Roles in Service Delivery

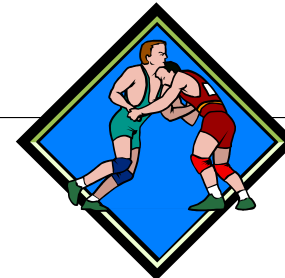
Productive Resources



Contributors to Service Quality and Satisfaction



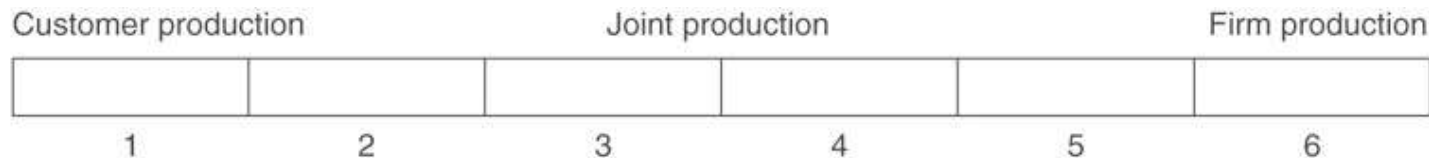
Competitors



Services Production Continuum

FIGURE 13.1
Service Production
Continuum

Source: Adapted from M. L. Meuter and M. J. Bitner, "Self-Service Technologies: Extending Service Frameworks and Identifying Issues for Research," in *Marketing Theory and Applications*, ed. D. Grewal and C. Pechmann (American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference, 1998), pp. 12–19. Reprinted by permission of the American Marketing Association.



Gas station illustration

1. Customer pumps gas and pays at the pump with automation.
2. Customer pumps gas and goes inside to pay attendant.
3. Customer pumps gas and attendant takes payment at the pump.
4. Attendant pumps gas and customer pays at the pump with automation.
5. Attendant pumps gas and customer goes inside to pay attendant.
6. Attendant pumps gas and takes payment from customer at the pump.

Customers as Productive Resources

- customers can be thought of as “partial employees”
 - contributing effort, time, or other resources to the production process
- customer inputs can affect organization’s productivity
- key issue:
 - should customers’ roles be expanded? reduced?

Customers as Contributors to Service Quality and Satisfaction

- Customers can contribute to:
 - their own satisfaction with the service
 - by performing their role effectively
 - by working with the service provider
 - the quality of the service they receive
 - by asking questions
 - by taking responsibility for their own satisfaction
 - by complaining when there is a service failure

Customers as Competitors

- customers may “compete” with the service provider
- “internal exchange” vs. “external exchange”
- internal/external decision often based on:
 - expertise capacity
 - resources capacity
 - time capacity
 - economic rewards
 - psychic rewards
 - trust
 - control

Strategies for Enhancing Customer Participation

FIGURE 13.2 Strategies for Enhancing Customer Participation

Source: Adapted from M. L. Meuter and M. J. Bitner, "Self Service Technologies: Extending Service Frameworks and Identifying Issues for Research," in *Marketing Theory and Applications*, ed. D. Grewal and C. Pechmann (American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference, 1998), pp. 12–19. Reprinted by permission of the American Marketing Association.



Strategies for Enhancing Customer Participation

- Define customers' jobs
 - helping oneself
 - helping others
 - promoting the company

- Recruit, educate, and reward customers
 - recruit the right customers
 - educate and train customers to perform effectively
 - reward customers for their contributions
 - avoid negative outcomes of inappropriate customer participation

- Manage the customer mix

Characteristics of Service that Increase the Importance of Compatible Segments

TABLE 13.2 Characteristics of Service That Increase the Importance of Compatible Segments

Source: Adapted from C. I. Martin and C. A. Pranter, "Compatibility Management: Customer-to-Customer Relationships in Service Environments," *Journal of Services Marketing* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1989), pp. 5-15. Reprinted with the permission of MCB University Press.

Characteristic	Explanation	Examples
Customers are in close physical proximity to each other.	Customers will more often notice each other and be influenced by each other's behavior when they are in close physical proximity.	Airplane flights Entertainment events Sports events
Verbal interaction takes place among customers.	Conversation (or lack thereof) can be a component of both satisfying and dissatisfying encounters with fellow patrons.	Full-service restaurants Cocktail lounges Educational settings
Customers are engaged in numerous and varied activities.	When a service facility supports varied activities all going on at the same time, the activities themselves may not be compatible.	Universities Health clubs Resort hotels
The service environment attracts a heterogeneous customer mix.	Many service environments, particularly those open to the public, will attract a variety of customer segments.	Public parks Public transportation Open-enrollment colleges
The core service is compatibility.	The core service is to arrange and nurture compatible relationships between customers.	Big Brothers/Big Sisters Weight loss group programs Mental health support groups
Customers must occasionally wait for the service.	Waiting in line for service can be monotonous or anxiety producing. The boredom or stress can be magnified or lessened by other customers, depending on their compatibility.	Medical clinics Tourist attractions Restaurants
Customers are expected to share time, space, or service utensils with each other.	The need to share space, time, and other service factors is common in many services but may become a problem if segments are not comfortable with sharing with each other or if the need to share is intensified because of capacity constraints.	Golf courses Hospitals Retirement communities Airplanes