

Service Quality Gaps in Hotels and Resorts

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Introduction

Effective marketing of services is a complicated procedure which encompasses a variety of strategies and plans, skills and professionalism, as well as tasks and responsibilities. Amongst the most prominent problems encountered in the service, firms are to ensure and maintain a consistent quality of services offered to the customers. This issue has caused confusion to the service marketers regarding the best and most well-organized approaches applicable to solving this complicated subject. Active quality management process and design in itself cannot ensure the attainment of the desired goal.

Among the most expected aspects of consumers in nearly all service products is quality. Ensuring consistently high and unique class is one of the strategies applied by businesses to win and retain customers for an extended period, acquiring their loyalty. There are a variety of approaches and concepts proposed by management literature in regard to the ways of dealing with service quality assurance. Consequently, there exists a range of thoughts and ideas on how the notion of “service quality” ought to be comprehended. The service quality gaps model is among the various theories of service quality which take on an unquestionably crucial role in the literature on service management. The gaps approach make expensive and critical propositions regarding how the idea of service quality ought to be perceived as well as the ways of service quality emergence across the service organization and sector.

A service is a kind of assistance or an intangible product offered to a client or customer by a service provider in exchange for wages or monetary value. A service can be defined by the unique characteristics that make it different from a good. These characteristics include perishability, intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability. Due to its nature, services need to be rendered in a more careful manner to ensure customer satisfaction as well as the satisfaction of the service providers (Maglio & Spohrer, 2008). In the marketing of a service, there exist gaps which represent what the clients expect and what they are offered by the service providers. These gaps include:

Gap 1- the gap between customer expectations and the ability of the service provider to understand these expectations. Customer satisfaction is a reflection of the experiences and expectations a consumer has with any product or service. The expectations of a customer make a representation of both the past and the current evaluations of any product, as well as the consumer experiences and interactions. Any consumer who makes significant purchases tends to research the [products and services](#). Additionally, they gather relevant information and data regarding salespersons, advertisements, associates, and friends who have used the product and even go ahead to conduct

tests and evaluations about the product.

Gap 2- the gap between the service providers' understanding of the customers' expectations and the establishment of customer-driven quality standards. Customers in the current world have indicated an increased demand. Other than high-quality products, a [need for high-quality](#) services has been observed. A strategic competitive advantage cannot be guaranteed and attained through physical goods only even in manufactured products. Consumer service, from a customer's point of perception, is much considered and regarded as a part of products.

Gap 3- the gap between the established standards and the actual service provided by the provider. In a contemporary conceptualization, service quality is a comparison made between the perceived expectations of services and the perceived performance. The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm forms the origin of the conceptualization of the quality of services. Any corporation with high service qualities is expected to meet and even exceed the expectations of a consumer while at the same time maintaining its economic competitiveness. Empirical studies have evidence suggesting that enhanced service quality is associated with an increase in profits as well as a long-term financial and competitive advantage.

Gap 4- the gap between the actual service offered to clients and the word of mouth, spread about the service. Word-of-mouth communication is regarded as one of the most valuable skills of marketing for small, local service providers. The most conspicuous and prevalent means is the face-to-face method through the electronic word-to-mouth technique is also relevant and applicable today.

Marketing service can, therefore, be very simple as well as very difficult for existing and future managers. The essence of service marketing a service is, however, to close the gap between the service providers and the client's expectations (Vargo, S. L. 2007). Marketing a service also serves as a key differentiator from one provider to another and also helps in building good customer relations as well as retention of customers (Grönroos, 1982). Managers have to, therefore, strive to make sure that the services marketed match the actual services rendered to customers, thus building trust with their customers.

Country View Hotel

Having reported at this establishment as an employee earlier this year, I had a lot of observations to make concerning the relationship between guests and the employees. First, the place lacks clear and well-labelled signage to provide directions to new guests. The officer at the gate barely welcomed guests into the establishment. This led to confusion for first-timers who visited the place as they had to remain stranded, waiting for somebody to give directions. The front desk receptionists were also not always available to respond to customer inquiries. In the reservations department, there was a lot of incompetence when it came to reserving rooms for clients as well as handling mail due to incompetent personnel handling the processes.

In this establishment, customers were received in a more or less informal manner, making them register a negative first impression of the kind of experience they would receive during their stay. In-country view, the food and beverages are of high quality, prepared by chefs with vast experiences and under very clean environments. However, the duration one has to wait is totally longer than what is expected.

The waiters in this establishment lack the courtesy needed to make a visitor have a good impression at first sight. One day in the evening, while we were about to leave for home, a senior government official arrived at the establishment and ordered a grilled chicken and fries. And happened that during that day, there had not been any grilled chicken. The chefs argued that the chicken could not be made ready at that time and wanted to offer an alternative, but the supervisor insisted that the meal had to be made ready. I had to spend an extra hour to ensure that the client got what he expected. Gap 2 existed when a group of guests reserved hotel rooms and instead were allocated different rooms. They picked up a quarrel with the manager and forcefully accessed the better rooms they had booked. Gap three happened when I went to serve a customer who had come to have dinner at the main restaurant. I gave him the menu which he went through and made an order. I took the order to the chefs for preparation, after which I served the guest. After taking the meal, he told me that our meal was poorly prepared as I placed the bill on the table. I tried to apologize for the mistake, but the customer remained adamant that we had to improve our standards. I reported to the supervisor who offered compensation to the visitor by ordering he be served with a glass of fresh juice.

The fourth gap happened in a situation where the manager disagreed with a group of guests on the price they were given for services, and the manager chased them. They vowed to spread a negative word of mouth and hence would ruin the establishment's reputation.

Rainbow Resort

My friend and I arrived at this hotel on a weekend afternoon to have refreshments as we relaxed after a busy week of classwork. We were received warmly at the reception and we were given directions. Our first observation at the front desk was a very good coordination of activities. A waiter led us to the hotel's garden, where we sat and ordered our drinks. We waited for our meals to be prepared. Surprisingly, the drinks were served in a short while. Waiters were very concerned with the customers' progress and would not settle until they were sure the client was comfortable. They were neatly dressed and were equipped with a lot of courtesy. The first gap in service emerged at this step when the waiters understood our expectations and served us accordingly.

Regarding the second gap, the hotel's menu was a hit-and-miss in this restaurant as the menu had a lot of items which were not available if ordered. This made customers unsatisfied since what was advertised on the hotel's website was contrary to a different thing compared to the actual meals offered. The menu looked more complicated than it really was. When it was time to take our meals, we were served with a meal almost similar to what we had ordered. When we requested to know why

this was the case, we were informed that the chefs lacked the ingredients to prepare the food we had ordered and, therefore, opted for an alternative. Although it was a positive move, it was without our consent. For this service provider to close out this gap, it should strive to meet the customers' expectations.

An observation on the third gap, the difference between the established standard and the actual service provided by the provider, occurred when we went to check in to the rooms we reserved on the hotel's website. These rooms were tinny as opposed to how they looked on the website. They were not well ventilated and the lights were not proper. We were to request for someone to install the lights for us.

Walton Inn

Upon arrival at the hotel, we were neither welcomed by anyone nor given any directions. We had to take time to locate the location of the front office as there was no well-labeled signage. We entered the reception only to find out the receptionist was not on the desk. We sat on the couch at the reception to wait for someone to respond to our inquiries. We waited for around ten minutes for the receptionist to return to his place. He greeted u,s although he wore a face that was not jovial. At this time, my impression was very negative of what experience we were to receive at the establishment. When we asked for directions to the restaurant, he picked up his phone and rang to call a waiter, who took a couple of minutes before showing up at the front desk. When the waiter came, he told us to follow him to the restaurant. I was shocked to find waiters seated while there were customers all over the place waiting to be served. We made our order and waited patiently, although it took a little bit longer to be prepared, I did not get disappointed as I had already had a bad impression on the experience at the place. I witnessed gap three of service when I noticed a waiter being naughty to a customer who wanted more clarification on the meals contained on the menu. The service offered at this restaurant, even though not as bad as the first impression, word of mouth spread about Walton Inn is basically negative due to the staff who render services. This gap between what is offered and what people say about the service provider determines the reputation of the organization.

Hurling Ham Beach Resort

I visited this resort during my August holiday. Hurling Ham resort is located on the seaside, with most rooms facing the sea. The décor and the outward look at the front part of the establishment reveal a great state of art facility. As I entered the gate, the gateman was very welcoming. I had great expectations in this establishment since the first impression I had, starting from the gatekeeper to the receptionist, was a bit lively. As I sat down at the restaurant, a neatly dressed waiter was already by my side to enquire from me. Her courtesy closed out the first gap as she was very ready to enhance my experience at the place. I made my order which was well and timely prepared. As I took my meal, the manager passed by to ensure that I was comfortable with the service. However, I noted a gap that

still existed when a customer was complaining that he booked a room facing the sea and was instead given another that faced away from the sea. The manager had to come in and settle the matter by ensuring the client was assigned a room that he desired. The resort is very famous, and people have a positive word of mouth, thus building a strong reputation.

Conclusively, from the above instances, it is clear that gaps do exist. There are the need and necessity for any service firm to meet and exceed the customer expectations and perceptions. This calls for any corporation to study and analyze the behaviour and service perception of their existing customers, which will facilitate them to plan and also strategize for the potential consumers. Companies can even formulate and launch a variety of initiatives and programs geared towards providing and offering enhanced and superior consumer services.

References

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