

Service Quality – Are We Managing to Serve?



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Service Quality



- In service delivery, our job is to meet or exceed positive expectations.
- When expectations are met, satisfaction results.
- When we exceed expectations, our users can experience the WOW factor.
- But there is a problem...

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- **As services improve, expectations also rise**
- **Every advertisement our users see or hear (and they are exposed to thousands each week) tell them to expect more.**
- **So satisfaction is an upward moving target.**
- **No provider can claim “We give great service” because great service today is only mediocre service tomorrow.**

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- The question becomes “How”. How do we continue to meet or exceed positive expectations?
- We do this in two ways.
- First, we decide where our focus lies.
- Our priority must be the client/learner. What kind of experience do we want to create for our them?

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- Second, we must decide what we are going to offer our clients. We have to ask “What business are we in?”
- We are all in the solution business.
- Solutions= Perceived Benefits
Perceived Costs

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- Establish **Guiding Principles** that tell you how “good” you want to be and how you plan to go about it. They should offer clear direction each time you need to make a decision.
- Examples include:
 - Choice
 - Convenience
 - Satisfaction guaranteed (with the process if not the outcome)
 - Responsive staff

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- Think about your product...let's call it a benefit package. It has 3 parts:
- Core
- Actual
- Augmentation(s)
- It may also help to think about how to provide benefit before, during, and after their encounter with us.

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- **Service delivery is comprised of a series of encounters.**
- **Focus on controlling each of these encounters.**
- **Remember too that not all encounters are created equal – first encounters are characterized by uncertainty, lines or queues are characterized by irritation.**

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- Identify Key Staff during each encounter
- In the private sector, 9 of 10 reasons clients remain loyal to a provider relate to front line staff.
- In all sectors, clients seek rapport ... a connection with their providers.
- Rapport is linked to cooperation, positive WOM, tolerance, etc.
- Front line staff are our greatest asset.

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- **Your clients seek:**
 - Tangibles
 - Reliability
 - Responsiveness
 - Empathy
 - Assurance
- **Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985**

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- **Build rapport with:**
- **Verbal immediacy**
 - Refer to self...I think, I'm going to...
 - Use present tense
- **Emotional Cues**
 - Smiling
 - Forward leaning
 - Eye contact
- **(Spontaneous)Support**
 - Share information to help improve the transaction and the experience
 - Explain in technical then lay terms
 - Frame information to offer best context

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- **I'm OK, You're OK?**
- **95% of unhappy customers do NOT complain, they just go away**

And

- **on average they tell 9 others that YOU failed them.**

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- **Establish Performance Standards for Each Encounter**
 - Base them on your guiding principles
 - Specificity is the key
 - Share with staff and clients
 - Fill gaps/share responsibility...focus on “owning the problem”
 - Develop systems, training, and rewards accordingly

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- **Suggested Standards for Face-to-Face Encounters**
 - Acknowledge/Greet Immediately (within 10 seconds) by:
 - ✦ Establishing Eye Contact
 - ✦ Smiling
 - ✦ Offering Undivided Attention (within reason)
 - ✦ End by asking if there is anything else you can do...that way the client ends the encounter

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- **Standards for Telephone Contact**
- **Answer within 3 rings**
- **Identify self**
- **Handle request or staff will call back within 3 hours**
- **Similar rules for e-mail – staff will provide a response with a set period (24 hours is preferred but volume may make this impossible; makes for a great goal though)**

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- **Conquering Resistance**
 - **Smile, be likeable**
 - **Open to their Concerns**
 - **Forward Lean**
 - **Try to win/win**
 - **Eye Contact**
 - **Nod**

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- **Overcome Errors**
 - Immediately acknowledge that the client is unhappy
 - If possible, correct immediately
 - Be empathetic, they will want (very badly) to tell their side of the story
 - Use symbolic atonement
 - Follow up