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SERVICES MARKETING

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SERVICES MARKETING

UNIT I INTRODUCTION Introduction– Definition– Service Economy – Evolution and growth of service sector – Nature and Scope of Services –Difference between services and tangible products– Unique characteristics of services– Challenges and issues in Services Marketing.

UNIT II SERVICE MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES Assessing service market potential – Classification of services – Expanded marketing mix – Service marketing – Environment and trends – Service market segmentation, targeting and positioning.

UNIT III SERVICE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT Service Life Cycle – New service development – Service Blue Printing – GAP model of service quality – Measuring service quality – SERVQUAL – Service Quality function development.

UNIT IV SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROMOTION Positioning of services – Designing service delivery System, Service Channel – Pricing of services, methods – Service marketing triangle – Managing demand, Managing supply, managing Demand and Supply of Service–Integrated Service marketing communication.

UNIT V SERVICE STRATEGIES Service Marketing Strategies for Health – Hospitality – Tourism – Financial – Logistics– Educational – Marketing of Online Services– Entertainment & public utility Information technique Services

UNIT – 1

INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE MARKETING

Definition for service

Service is an act or performance offered by one party to another that essentially intangible and does not normally result in ownership of anything. Its product may or may not be tied the physical product. –

Philip Kotler

E.g.: transportation, electricity.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOODS AND SERVICES:

S.NO.	GOODS	SERVICES	IMPLICATION
1.	Tangible	Intangible	Services cannot be inventoried It cannot be patent It cannot readily displayed
2.	Standardized	Heterogeneous	Service delivery customer satisfaction depends on employee action Service quality depends on uncontrollable factors
3.	Production and consumption are separate	Simultaneous production and consumption	Customers participate in and affect transaction Customer affect

			each other.
4.	Non-perishable	Perishable	It is different to synchronize supply and demand of services. Service cannot be returned or resold.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE MARKETING:

1. **INTANGIBLE:** Services are performance or actions rather than objects. They cannot be seen, tasted or touched.

E.g. Surgery, Examination

2. **HETROGENITY:** Since services are performances produced by human Beings, no two services will be alike. (it differs from hour to hour, day to day) customers are not same

E.g. Tax accountant may provide different service to two customers

3. **SIMULTANEOUS PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION:** Services are sold first and then produced and consumed simultaneously

WHAT IS	PEOPLE	POSSESSION
Nature of service	People processing – directed at people’s bodies	Possession processing – directed at physical possession
Tangible actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty saloon • Physical therapy • Funeral services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freight transportation • Repair services • Laundry services
Intangible actions	<p>Mental stimulus processing – directed at people’s mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Advertising ★ Broa 	<p>Information processing – directed at intangible assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Accounting ★ Insurance ★ Security investments

E.g. In

a

restaurant the services are sold first and the dinner experience is produced and consumed at the same time

4. **PERISHABILITY:** Services referred to the fact that it cannot be saved,

Stored or returned

E.g. A seat in an airplane

NATURE OF SERVICE:

Diag: Understanding the nature of service act

SCOPE OF SERVICE MARKETING

A service business is one where the perceived value of the offering to the buyer is determined more by the service rendered than the product offered. In this way the nature and scope of services pose different challenges for managers in service businesses. Such businesses include those that provide an almost

entirely intangible offering, such as legal services, health care and cleaning services and businesses that offer both services and products such as restaurants and retail outlets.

The definition and scope of the service concept is wide and can mean any or all the following:

Table 1.1: Scope of services

Service activities	Service as a concept
Customer service	A service organization
Service-based activities	As a core product
Added value activities	As an augmented product
	As product support
	As an act

(a). Service as an organization: It is the entire business or not-for-profit structure that resides within the service sector. For example, a restaurant, an insurance company a charity.

(b). Service as core product: The commercial outputs of a service organization such as a bank account, an insurance policy or a holiday.

(c). Service as product augmentation: any peripheral activity designed to enhance the delivery of a core product. For example, provision of a courtesy car, complimentary coffee at the hairdresser.

(d). Service as product support: Any product or customer-oriented activity that takes place after the point of delivery. For example, monitoring activities, a repair service, up-dating facilities.

(e). Service as an act that is service as a mode of behavior such as helping out and giving advice.

However from a market or consumer point of view the relative importance of different components of the service offering can range vastly from one customer to another. So a service must be considered from the point of view of many types of customers. For example, two people may pay the same amount for a service but may be paying for different aspects of the service. A business person may dine regularly in an expensive, upmarket restaurant because of the convenience to their place of work and the perceived status of entertaining guests there. Other customers of the same restaurant may eat there regularly because of the excellent food, modern décor and menu choice.

SERVICE ECONOMY

Meaning of service economy:

The size of the service sector is increasing in virtually all countries around the world. In emerging economies, the service output is growing rapidly and often represents at least half of the GDP. Thus, Service economy is growing. As a national economy develops, the relative share of employment between agriculture, industry (including manufacturing and mining).The service economy in developing countries like India is mostly concentrated in financial services, health, and education.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF SERVICE SECTOR

1. GOVERNMENT POLICIES:

It is Govt. which makes mandatory for price levels, distribution strategies, defining procedure attributes.

Another important action taken by the Govt.'s of many countries has been privatization.

“Privatization” means the policy of transforming Govt. organization into investors owned companies.

The transformation of such operations like telecoms, airlines has led to restructuring cost cutting and more market focused.

PROS OF PRIVATIZATION:

- a. Increase the efficiency
- b. Increase in profits

New change will require services firm to change their marketing strategy, operational procedures, and HR policies.

2. SOCIAL CHANGES

Now a day there is a drastic change, two members are working, which requires to hire individuals to perform tasks that used to be performed by a house hold member.

E.g. Child care

Laundry

Food preparation

Combinations of changing life styles like

√ Higher income

√ Declining prices for many high technology products – made for people to by computers.

√ Mobile phone etc.

Increased imaginations into countries – U.S, Canada and Australia.

3. BUSINESS TRENDS

Many professional associations have been forced by Govt. to remove long-standing bars on adv and promotional activities.

Franchising has become wider spread in many service industries.

Licensing of independent entrepreneurs to produce and sell a branded service according to tightly specified procedures.

4. ADVANCES IN IT:

Changes come from the integration of computers and tele-communication

More powerful software enables firm to create databases that combine information about customers with details of all their transaction, so that they can be used to predict new trends, segment the market, new marketing opportunities.

The creation of wireless networks and transfer of electronic equipments such as cell phones to lap tops and scanners, to allow sales and customer service personnel to keep in touch.

5. INTERNATIONALISATION AND GLOBALIZATION:

A strategy of international expansion may be driven by a sector for new markets or by the need to respond to existing customers who are traveling abroad in greater numbers.

When companies set up operations in other countries they often prefer to deal with just a few international suppliers rather than numerous local firms.

The net effect is to increase competition and to encourage the transfer of innovation in both products and processes from country to country.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN SERVICE MARKETING

(a). Tangibility

A product is tangible, which means the customer can touch and see the product before deciding to make a purchase. Items such as packaging and presentation may compel a customer to purchase a product.

Services, on the other hand, are not tangible, which can make them more difficult to promote and sell than a product.

(b). Relationship and Value

Products tend to fill a customer's need or want, so companies can use this to sell a product. A service is more about selling a relationship and the value of the relationship between the buyer and seller of the service. For example, a car is something a buyer can touch and see as well as use. A service, such as lifestyle coaching, for example, is not tangible. A lifestyle coach may be able to assist clients in creating a life plan and implementing steps to transform his life into one that the client wants to live, but it is not something tangible that the client can place in his home and look at every day. Therefore, the client needs to perceive the value of the service, which can be harder to get across.

(c). One Versus Many

Marketing products tends to involve multiple products that make up the line. For example, cleaning product manufacturers tend to market not just one cleaning product. Instead, they have a line of cleaning products to serve the various needs of their customers. Services, on the other hand, typically have a single option. It can be harder to promote and sell the reputation of one single service over the benefits of many different products.

(d). Comparing Quality

Measuring the quality of a product is easier than measuring that of a service. If a customer buys a cleaning product to clean the kitchen sink and it doesn't do the job, the customer knows the value of the product is zero. On the other hand, it is harder to measure the quality of a service.

(e). Return Factor

If a customer purchases a product and it doesn't work as it is supposed to, the customer can return the product for her money back or at least to receive a store credit. A service is consumed as it is offered, so it lacks the return factor that a product has. Some service providers overcome this by offering money-back guarantees.

MARKETING CHALLENGES OF SERVICES:

Managing, growing, and profiting with both product and service businesses are challenging tasks. But the challenges are different from one to the other. Listed below are some of the most common and

difficult challenges of growing and .managing consulting, professional, or technology service businesses that don't necessary apply to product businesses.

- (a). Clients can't see or touch services before they purchase them: This makes services difficult to conceptualize and evaluate from the client perspective, creating increased uncertainty and perception of risk. From the firm's perspective, service intangibility can make services difficult to promote, control quality, and set price.
- (b). Services are often produced and consumed simultaneously: This creates special challenges in service quality management that product companies do not even consider. Products are tested before they go out the door. If a product has quality problems while in production the company can fix them and customers are none the wiser. Service production happens with the customer present, creating a very different and challenging dynamic.
- (c). Trust is necessary: Some level of trust in the service organization and its people must be established before clients will engage services. This is as important, sometimes more important, than the service offerings and their value proposition.
- (d). Competition is often not who you think: Competition for product companies are other product companies. Competition for service companies are often the clients themselves: Sure, sometimes you find yourself in a competitive shootout (some firms more than others), but often the client is asking 'should we engage this service; at all' and 'if so, should we just do it in-house'.
- (e). Brand extends beyond marketing: Brand in service businesses is about who you are as much as what you say about yourself. And internal brand management and communications can be equally as vital to marketing success as are external communication.
- (f). Proactive lead generation is difficult: Many service companies have tried, and failed, at using lead generation tactics that work wonders for product companies. Implemented correctly, traditional product techniques, such as direct marketing and selling, can work for services, but the special dynamics of how clients buy services must be carefully woven into your strategy.
- (g). Service deliverers often do the selling : Many product companies have dedicated sales forces. For services, the selling is often split between sales, marketing, professional, and management staff.
- (h). Marketing and sales lose momentum: Most product companies have dedicated marketers and sellers. They market and sell continuously, regardless of the revenue levels they generate. In many services companies the marketers and sellers also must manage and deliver. This can often lead to the

Services Revenue Rollercoaster-wide swings between revenue and work overflow, and revenue and work drought.

(i). Passion is necessary yet elusive: The more passion, spirit, hustle, and desire your staff brings to the organization every day, the more revenue and success you will have. The correlation between staff passion and financial success is direct and measurable

CHAPTER-2 Services Markets Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of aggregating customers with similar wants, needs, preferences, or buying behaviour. Market targeting involves evaluating the attractiveness of the segments and selecting ones the firm will serve. In other words, segmentation is the analysis conducted about customers and targeting is the managerial decision about whom to serve. Both of these are required for effective market positioning, which involves establishing the competitive position for the service in the mind of the customer and creating or adapting the service mix to fit the position.

The segmentation process, shown in the following figure is concerned to divide a heterogeneous follows four broad steps:

- The definition of the market to be addressed.
- The identification of alternative bases for segmentation.
- An examination of these bases and the choice of the best base or bases for segmentation.
- The identification of individual market segments, an assessment of their attractiveness and the selection of specific target segments.

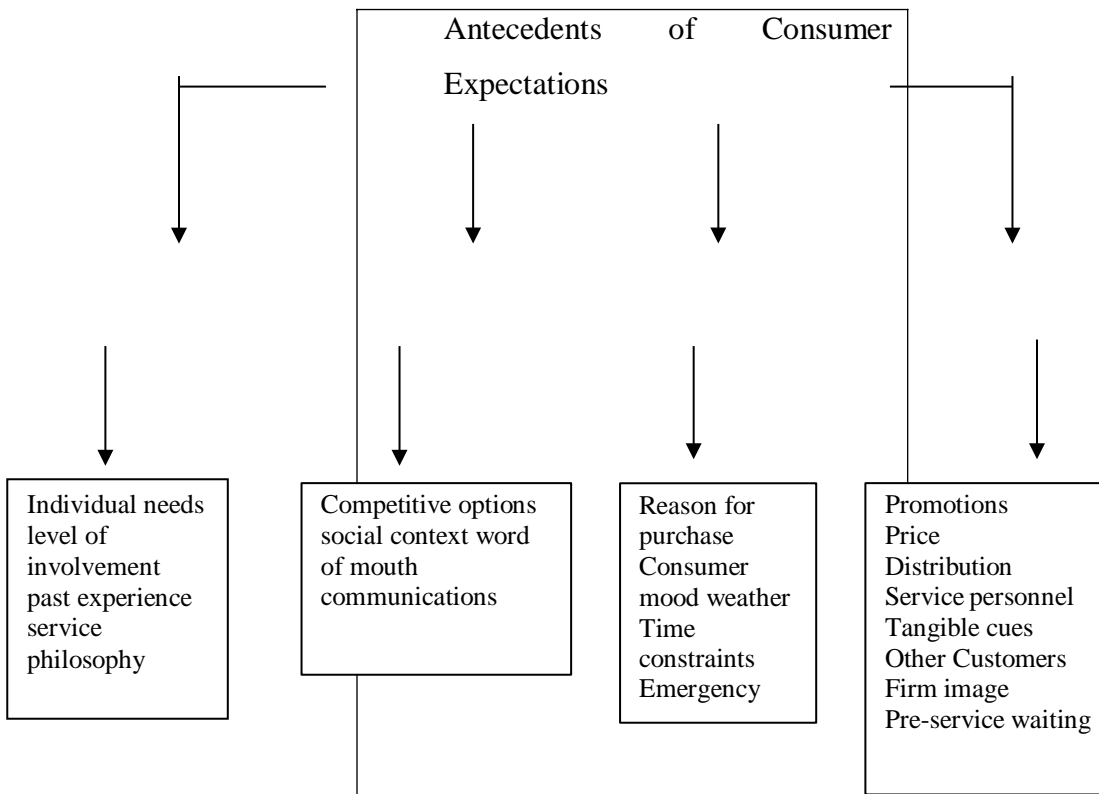
ANTECEDENTS OF CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS:

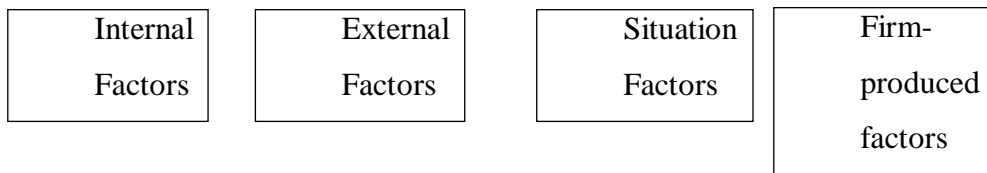
I INTERNAL FACTORS:

Internal Factors impacting a consumer's expectations of a service include the consumer's personal needs, level of involvement, past experience, and service philosophy.

a. Individual needs:

The personal needs of consumers are based on Maslow's hierarchy of Needs Model. According to Maslow, lower order needs must be fully, or at least partially, satisfied in a sequential order before higher-order needs will affect human behaviour.





Physiological Needs: Human need for food, shelter and clothing

Safety Needs: Human need for security, protection from physical
Harm, and avoidance of the unexpected.

Social-belongingness needs: Desire to be accepted by members of family, groups and other individuals.

Self-esteem Needs: Desire for status, esteem, and to be respected by others.

Self-actualization: Attainment by an individual of all he or she can be.

b. LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT:

The second personal factor affecting consumer expectations is the consumer's level of involvement with the service. Involvement has two effects on expectations. First as the level of involvement increases, the gap between the ideal level of service and the desired level of service narrows. Second, as the level of involvement increases, the zone of tolerance decreases. Consumers are less tolerant when service is less than ideal.

c. PAST EXPERIENCE:

The most important factor affecting consumer expectations of a service is a consumer's past experience. Past experience includes experience with a particular service vendor, experience with other vendors within the same industry, and experience with related services.

d. SERVICE PHILOSOPHY:

Consumer's expectations are also affected by his or her personal philosophy concerning the delivery of services. Some consumers, by nature, have high standards concerning the quality of service delivery and very little tolerance for deviation. Other consumers have lower standards and tend to be more tolerant of service deviations.

Individuals develop their personal service philosophy through a combination of two inputs: hereditary and past experience. A major part of how individuals look at services is inherited or what they expect from services is based on their personality and temperament. However, past experience molds and tempers the personality. In early childhood, individuals learn from observing others. Later in life, they learn from their own experiences.

II EXTERNAL FACTORS:

The three external factors that affect consumer expectations are competitive options, social context, and word-of-mouth communications.

a. Competitive Options:

The level of service consumers expect from a particular service vendor is impacted by the alternatives available to the consumer. In many cases, expectations of services will not only be affected by other vendors in the same industry but by what is available in other service industries.

b. Social Context:

A consumer's social situation can have an impact on his or her expectations of a service. People's desired level of expectations will often increase when they are with others who are important to them, while their zone of tolerance is normally reduced.

c. Word-of-mouth Communications:

The third external factor is word of mouth communications. It is the strongest source of information used by consumers in forming expectations. Consumers will often seek the opinion of others before purchasing a service. Word of mouth communication can come from three sources: personal sources, expert sources, and derived sources and is used to solidify or establish the predicted level of service. For services with which consumers have little knowledge or experience, word of mouth communications can be used to establish the desired and ideal levels of service.

Personal sources include friends, relatives and work associates. Expert sources are sometimes sought out, especially for high-involvement purchases. Experts will often provide information that consumers can use in forming expectations about the technical nature of the service, while personal sources usually discuss only the way they were treated by the firm's personnel. Expert sources are especially valuable when consumers lack knowledge of the service and do not know the ideal or desired level of service they should expect. Derived sources are third party sources.

III SITUATIONAL FACTORS:

Consumer expectations of a service are affected by such situational factors as the reason for the purchase, the consumer's mood, the weather, time constraints, and whether the service is an emergency. Situational factors are temporary changes in the normal state of things. These temporary changes impact what consumers expect from a service.

a. **Reason for purchase:** The reason the service is purchased can alter consumer expectations

b. Consumer Mood:

Consumer mood states will impact expectations. Individuals in good mood tend to be more tolerant of service personnel. Their zone of tolerance is greater and their expectation level of adequate service is lower. Individuals in a bad mood demonstrate the reverse characteristics. The tolerance zone is reduced and the expectation level of adequate service is higher.

c. Weather:

Weather also plays a role in consumer expectations. In normal weather, passengers expect airlines to arrive on time, but in bad weather, passengers realize there may be a delay. The desired level of service remains the same but the passenger's predicted level of service is reduced due to the inclement weather conditions.

d. Time Constraints:

It also impact customer expectations. Firms who use Manpower for temporary workers modify their expectations when faced with time constraints. If a firm needs help immediately, they will expect manpower to be able to meet the need, but they will normally lower their predicted expectations of the person's work ability. Their zone of tolerance would be wider since manpower would not have sufficient time to locate the best individual.

e. Emergencies: Emergencies and catastrophes have an impact on consumer expectations.

IV FIRM PRODUCED FACTORS:

Consumer expectations are affected by the 3 primary factors discussed in Promotions, pricing and distribution.

- Promotions - promises made in advertisements and sales promotions will be used by consumers in forming their predicted level of service for a particular firm. Advertising can also modify a consumer's desired level of service, adequate level of service, and zone of tolerance.
- Pricing - Consumer expectations are affected by the price of the service. The general rule is that the higher the price, the higher the consumer's expectations of a service and the narrower the zone of tolerance. Determination of a high or low price, however, is relative to the competition and to other service alternatives.
- Distribution - Distribution has an impact on service expectations. The availability and accessibility of a service to customers has an impact on their expectations. Many banks, such as Bank Boston, are now offering on-line computer banking services that include paying bills, monitoring daily account activities, and transferring funds.

a. **Service Personnel:** Conversations with service personnel also have an impact on expectations.

b. **Tangible Cues:**

It consists of such things as the appearance of the interior and exterior of the facility, the furniture, and the equipment used in the service, interior décor, cleanliness, point-of-purchase displays, and the appearance of the firm's personnel. For most services, the appearance of the service personnel is very important. Patients have certain expectations concerning the appearance of doctors, nurses, and receptionists.

c. **Other Customers:** Expectations of a service can be affected by other customers.

d. **Firm Image:**

The image consumers have of a firm will have an impact on their expectations of the service. If they have a high image of the firm, they will have high expectations. If the image is low, expectations will be low. The image a consumer has can also affect the zone of tolerance. Individuals will be more tolerant of service deviations if they have a high image of the firm than if they have a low image.

ROLE OF CONSUMERS EXPECTATIONS:

Consumer expectations are important during all three stages of the purchase process: the pre-purchase phase, the service encounter, and the post-purchase phase.

• **During Pre-Purchase phase** - Consumer expectations influence the decisions of individuals during the pre-purchase phase.

• **During Post-purchase phase** - Even after service has been performed, consumer expectations can be altered. Consumer expectations are the basis for evaluating service quality.

MANAGING CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS:

The higher the expectations, the greater the probability of purchase. The lower the expectations, the lower the probability of purchase. That the higher the expectations, the greater the chances that the service firm will not be able to meet consumer expectations and that the customer will be dissatisfied.

1. **During Pre-Purchase Phase:** Managing customer expectations during the pre-purchase phase consist of 3 steps. First, learn what customers expect. Second, tell customers what they can expect. Third, consistently provide the service that customer expect.

2. **During the service encounter** three strategies can be used during the service encounter to manage customer expectations. First service personnel must communicate with the customer during the service encounter. Second, if possible service providers should modify the service to meet the customer's expectations. Third, if the service cannot be modified the service personnel should explain why the customer expectation cannot be met. The goal during this phase is to ensure the services are provided matches the consumer's expectation

3. **During the post-purchase phase:** Service firms have 3 strategies. They can use after the service has been completed. First, Companies should communicate with customers immediately after the service is completed to see if the expectations were met. Second, firms can use a follower programme such as an evaluation survey sent to the customer through the mail or a phone call. Third, companies should have a procedure for dealing with dissatisfied customers that will assist in managing future expectations.

THE PURCHASE PROCESS FOR SERVICES.

CONSUMPTION VALUES:

It is a perceived value or utility an individual believes a specific choice will provide. Consumers purchase goods and services because they satisfy certain needs or wants in their lives. Businesses purchase goods and services for the same basic reactions: to satisfy the needs and wants of themselves or their clients.

FUNCTIONAL VALUE:

Perceived utility acquired when a particular choice provides utilitarian or functional benefits for the consumer.

SOCIAL VALUE:

Perceived utility acquired from making a purchase decision that is associated with a particular referent group. This group could be friends or it could be based on demographics such as age, sex, ethnic origin, or religion.

EMOTIONAL VALUE:

It is obtained when the choice stimulates feelings and emotions within the consumer. For many services, especially entertainment services, perceived emotional utility is an important motivating factor in the purchase decision.

EPISTEMIC VALUE:

It is acquired when a purchase decision is perceived to satisfy a desire for knowledge, provide novelty, or arouse curiosity.

CONDITIONAL VALUE:

It is the perceived utility provided when an alternative is chosen because of temporary situational factors that will enhance one of the other consumption values. Finances may be a temporary situational factor that would alter a purchase decision.

A PURCHASE MODEL FOR SERVICES:

The purchase model for services has three distinct phases. The first phase is called the pre-purchase phase, which is when purchase options are contemplated and decisions are actually made..

PRE-PURCHASE PHASE:

The pre-purchase phase occurs before the consumer decides to purchase the service and usually involves a decision-making process that is influenced by four different factors: internal factors, external factors, firm-produced factors, and perceived risk.

INTERNAL FACTORS:

Four internal factors impact a consumer's decision during the pre-purchase phase. These factors are individual needs and wants of consumers, past experience, expectations, and level of involvement. In every purchase decision, the most important factor is the particular needs and wants of the individual. Not only do these needs and wants vary from one person to another but they also vary for each individual consumer.

EXTERNAL FACTORS:

Three external factors influence the purchase decision during the pre-purchase phase: the competitive options available to the consumer, the social context of the purchase, and word-of-mouth communications. The selection of a service is influenced by the social context of the purchase. Example: The hotel one selects for a business trip will probably differ from that chosen for a vacation.

FIRM-PRODUCED FACTORS:

Promotions, pricing and the distribution system are firm-produced factors that impact the purchase decision. Promotions include advertising, personal selling, and sales promotions, such as coupons, premiums, sweepstakes and contests. All of these promotional efforts are designed to persuade consumers to purchase particular services from a specific service provider.

PERCEIVED RISK:

Risk is the exposure of the consumer to the chance of injury, loss or damage resulting from the purchase decision. Consumers seek means to reduce this risk through the use of the internal factors, the external

factors, and the firm-produced factors discussed above. Risk has two components: uncertainty and consequences.

PERFORMANCE RISK:

It is the chance that the service will not perform or provide the benefit for which it was purchased.

FINANCIAL RISK:

It is the amount of monetary loss incurred by the consumer if the service fails. Purchasing services involves a higher degree of financial risk than purchasing goods because fewer service firms have money back guarantees or warranties of any kind.

TIME LOSS RISK:

It refers to the amount of time lost by the consumer as a result of the failure of the service. A consumer who takes his or her automobile into a repair shop for servicing because it is running poorly will experience time loss if the vehicle is left there for six hours and the service performed does not correct the problem.

OPPORTUNITY RISK:

Risk involved when consumers must choose one service over another.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK:

Chance that the purchase of a service will not fit into the individual's self concept.

SOCIAL RISK:

Probability that a service will not meet with approval from others who are significant to the consumer making the purchase.

PHYSICAL RISK:

Chance that a service will actually cause physical harm to the customer.

RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES USED BY CONSUMERS:

How do consumers and businesses reduce the risk of a purchase? First, they examine their own personal experiences. Consumers tend to continue to patronize the same firm if they have not received bad service from that firm in the past. This is especially true if one has patronized a particular firm regularly. Going to a new service firm has a much higher element of the unknown, thus is a higher risk. As a result, there tends to be higher loyalty toward service firms than toward sellers of tangible goods.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE PERCEIVED PURCHASE RISK:

Type of Risk	Reducing Uncertainty	Reducing Consequences
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Performance	Certification Branding Communication	Quality control standards and procedures Warranties
Financial	Trial purchases Sampling Promotional incentives Price reductions	Financial guarantees
Time loss	Branding	Compensation offers
Opportunity	Branding	Quality control standards and procedures
Psychological	Branding Communications	Quality control standards and procedures
Social	Branding Communications	Quality control standards and procedures
Physical	Instruction Communications Certification	Quality control standards and procedures Safety standards Certification

THE SERVICE ENCOUNTER:

The second stage of the purchase process model is the service encounter, which is the actual interaction point between the customer and the service provider.

ROLE THEORY:

In the purchasing of services, consumers and service providers play certain roles in the transaction process, a concept referred to as role theory. Role Theory is similar to what occurs in Hollywood with

the production of a movie. Individuals are hired to play a certain role. For example, Julia Roberts was hired to play a secretary in her Oscar award winning performance in Erin Brockovich.

SCRIPT THEORY:

Scripts are a learned sequence of behaviors obtained through experience or through communication with others. Julia Robert’s role in the movie Erin Brockovich was that of an attorney’s secretary. Her script provided the details of how she was to perform the role and the way she should dress. The script provided both the actions and words to be used. In the service industry, the script provides the detailed actions that are expected of service personnel and customers.

An example of a script that a patient may have for a dentist appears below:

It becomes a routinized behavior sequence in which the customer is not even cognizant of what is going on. He has done it so many times that little or no thought is required.

1.call for an appointment	11. X-rays and prep by an assistant
2. Go to dental office	12. wait for dentist.
3.Check in with the receptionist	13. Dentist explains procedure
4. Fill out papers	14. Dental procedure is performed.
5. Wait in the waiting room	15. Dentist explains dental care and any instructions concerning procedure just performed
6. Taken to dental Chair by an assistant	16. Cleaned by dental assistant

BENEFITS:

Understanding the script expected of customers allows firms to flowchart their operation. From this flowchart, operational flaws can be detected. In addition, scripts provide information for standardization of operations and enhancement of productivity.

CONSEQUENCES:

Altering scripts can also be frustrating to service personnel. Management must be sure all service personnel understand the new script and the benefits it provides. If the employee does not understand and recognize the benefits of the script change, it is doubtful it will be successful and accomplish the desired results.

THE SERVICE ENVIRONMENT:

The third component that affects the service encounter is the environment in which the service is performed. Tangible elements of the facility, the firm’s atmosphere, and other customers present are part of this environment.

SERVICE PERSONNEL:

In service encounters where service personnel and customers have face-to-face interaction, the most critical element of the experience becomes the conduct of the service personnel. Customers expect the service personnel to perform specific roles and follow certain scripts. Management must hire individuals qualified for the service jobs. Once hired, training should include scripts, role expectations, and guidelines for customer interaction. Incentives and compensation systems should encourage employees to provide high-quality service.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Support services include all of the activities and materials service personnel need to perform their work properly. A primary responsibility of support services is to provide the equipment and supplies needed to perform the service. Example, for a dentist, the support services are the dental hygienist, chair-side assistant, and the receptionist.

POST PURCHASE PHASE:

The third stage of the purchase process is the post purchase phase. During the post purchase phase, customers make an evaluation of the service quality they received and their overall level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Evaluation of Service Quality:

Compare what you perceive you received to what you expected to receive. If your expectations were met or exceeded, you will believe you received high quality service. If your expectations were not met, you will feel the quality of service was poor.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

Service quality is a global evaluation of all past service experiences. Research has found that customers' perceived evaluations of service quality have an impact on their level of satisfaction "Therefore, service quality evaluation is an antecedent to customer satisfaction.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY:

The process of deciding the cause of a service failure is called attribution theory. Idea in which a customer uses a process to analyze the level and cause of dissatisfaction with a service.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

1. PRODUCT AND SERVICE FEATURES:

It is influenced by evaluation of product or service. Ex: In hotel features like restaurants, room comfort, privacy, helpfulness and courtesy, room price etc., are evaluated.

2. Consumer emotions:

It may also affect the perception of satisfaction with product/services. Emotions can be stable; good mood etc. When you are in good mood, you will have a positive frame mind towards the services you experience. Positive emotions like happiness, pleasure, elation, sense of warm-heartedness enhanced customer satisfaction.

3. Attributions for service success/failure:

When the service firm have been surprised by an customer (either by performing better/worse), consumer tend to look for reasons.

Ex: If a customer of a weight-loss organization fails to lose the weight, he tend to search for the causes.

4. Perceptions for Equity/fairness:

Customer is also influenced by the perceptions of equity and fairness. They ask themselves.

Ex: Did other customers get better treatment?

Have I been treated fairly compared to other customers.

5. Other consumers, family members and co-workers:

Customer satisfaction is influenced by other people.

Ex: In a business setting, satisfaction with a new service; a new customer relationship management software service will be influenced by individual's personal experience with the software itself.

6. National customer satisfaction indexes:

It measures and tracks customer satisfaction at Macro Level. This focus on quality of output. The first measure was founded in the year 1989 called Swedish Customer satisfaction Barometer.

Outcome of Customer satisfaction:

1. It is not only tracking the economic efficiency and pricing statistics but also indicates the quality of life.
2. Customer satisfaction is correlated with other measures of economic health Corporate earnings; Stock Value.
3. Increasing level of customer satisfaction linked to customer loyalty and profits.
4. There is a relationship between dissatisfaction / disloyalty.

SERVICE ENCOUNTER:

When the customer interacts with the service firm, it is called moments of truth. Every service encounter is an opportunity to build satisfaction.

The importance of encounters:

- a. If a customer is interacting with a firm for the first time, the initial encounter will create a first impression of the organization.
- b. Even when the customer has had multiple interactions with a firm, each individual encounter is important in creating a image of high quality.
- c. A combination of positive and negative interactions will leave the customer confused towards the firms quality.

d. Not all encounters are important. There are certain key areas where it is important to concentrate.

Ex: In hotel-early encounter to visitors.

In hospitals encounters with nurse is important.

Types of service encounters:

1. **Remote counter:**

It can happen without any direct human contact.

Ex: ATM, Internet website, Billing statement.

Although there is no direct human contact, each represents an opportunity for the firm to reinforce/establish quality perceptions in the customer. Here, tangible evidence, quality of technical processes will determine the quality.

2. **Phone encounter:**

This will occur between and customer and the firm. Organisations such as insurance, telecom department will use this.

Ex: Enquiry

Here tone of voice, employee knowledge, effectiveness/efficiency in handling customer will judge the quality.

3. **Face-face-encounter:**

Determining and understanding service quality issues in face-face to contexts is most complex of all verbal and nonverbal behaviours are important determinants of quality.

EX: In a b2b setting direct encounter between the business customer and sales people will determine the quality.

Sources of pleasurable and displeasure in service encounter:

1. **Recovery** – employee response to service delivery system failure:

There has been a failure in service delivery system and an employee is required to handle customer complaints/ disappointments.

2. **Adaptability-** Employee response to customer needs and requests:

Here how the service firm is able to adapt its delivery system when the needs are not met. Here the customers judge service

3. **Spontaneity** – unprompted and unsolicited employee action:

Employee spontaneity in delivering memorably good or poor service is the remembered by the customers.

Ex: Being treated like royalty.; Rudeness, Stealing, discrimination, ignoring the customers.

4. **Coping-** Employee response to problem customers:

In some cases, customers were basically uncooperative provider. In such cases how the service provider copes with the situation is a challenging.

STRATEGIES FOR INFLUENCING CUSTOMER PERCEPTION:

1. **Measure and manage customer satisfaction service quality:**

Track the trends, diagnose problems, and link to other customer focused strategies.

2. **Aim for customer quality and satisfaction in every service encounter.**

Every service encounter is critical to customer retention. Thus many firms aim for zero defects or 100% satisfaction.

Clear documentation of all the points of contact between the organisation and its customers.

Development of understanding of customer expectation by developing appropriate strategy.

3. **Plan for effective recovery**

When service customers have been disappointed on the first try doing right the 2nd time is essential to maintain customer loyalty. This implies a need for service process and system analysis to determine the root cause of failure and redesign the service system.

4. **Facilitate adaptability and flexibility:**

The existence of this encounter theme suggested the need to know when and how the system can flexed, and when and how to explain to customers why a particular request can't be granted.

5. **Encourage spontaneity:**

Recruitment and selection procedures can be used to hire employees with strong service orientation whose natural tendency is to be service minded. Strong service culture, employee empowerment, effective supervision and monitoring should be done.

6. **Help employees cope with problem customers:**

Employees need appropriate training and tools to deal with problem customers. Training the customers is essential so that they know what to expect and know the appropriate behavior in the situations.

7. Manage the dimensions of quality at the encounter level:

Whenever the customer is encountering the service, the service firm should take measures to maintain the dimensions of service of service quality.

CLASSIFICATION OF SERVICES

II) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON ULTIMATE USER:

A) CONSUMER:

Services which are directly provided to the consumer.

B) BUSINESS TO BUSINESS:

Services are provided to business operations.

E.g. Ad agency

C) INDUSTRIAL:

Services are provided to the industries.

E.g. Repair services, Maintenance

III) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON LEVELS OF TANGIBILITY:

A) Highly tangible – Car rentals

B) Services linked to tangible goods

E.g. Domestic appliances, radio, T.V.

C) Highly intangible – Consultancy, Legal service

D) Major Service link with minor tangibles

E.g. Air lines

IV) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON SERVICE OPERATION

A) PEOPLE BASED SERVICES:

High contact with people – Bank, Restaurant, Education.

B) Equipment based low contact – ATM, Cinema.

V) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON SPECIALIZATION:

A) PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

E.g. Medical services, Legal services.

B) NON PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

E.g. Baby sittings

VI) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON PROFIT ORIENTATION

- A) Banks, Hotel and catering services
- B) Based on Non Profit – Church, Temples

VII) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON EXTERNAL – INTERNAL SERVICES:

A) EXTERNAL SERVICES

E.g. A/c repairs, computer installation.

B) INTERNAL SERVICES

E.g. Recruitment, internal office cleanliness

VII) CLASSIFICATION BASED ON CUSTOMER EMPLOYEE PRESENCE:

- A) Self service – Only customer presence is required

E.g. ATM

- B) Inter Personal service – Presence of both customer and employee.

E.g. Educational institutions

- C) Remote services – Presence of only Employees

E.g. Insurance Companies

EXPANDED MARKETING MIX OF SERVICES (7 P'S):

- 1) Price
- 2) Product
- 3) Place
- 4) Promotion
- 5) Physical evidence
- 6) Process
- 7) People

1. PRICE: By deciding the price of the services, time, and unwanted mental and physical effort, exposure to negative sensory experiences should be considered.

2. PRODUCT: In services both core product and bundle of supplementary service segments should be considered. The benefits desired by customers and how well the competing products are performed should be analyzed.

3. PLACE: Here decisions are to be taken on the methods and channels used. Delivery made through physical or electronic distribution channel or both depending on nature of service

4. PROMOTION: This involves providing needed information and advice, persuading the target customers and encouraging the customers take action at specific times.

Therefore, communication can be delivered by individual's media and press.

Their promotional activities may influence brand choice.

5. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE: The appearance of buildings, interior furnishing, equipment, staff members is which provides tangible evidence of firm's service quality.

6. PROCESS: It is a method and sequence of action in service performance.

Poor process makes it difficult for frontline staff to do their jobs well, resulting in low productivity and increased service failure.

7. PEOPLE: They are the intermediary between customers and the firm. Service quality is often assessed based on customers' interaction with frontline staff.

Services Markets Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of aggregating customers with similar wants, needs, preferences, or buying behaviour. Market targeting involves evaluating the attractiveness of the segments and selecting ones the firm will serve. In other words, segmentation is the analysis conducted about customers and targeting is the managerial decision about whom to serve. Both of these are required for effective market positioning, which involves establishing the competitive position for the service in the mind of the customer and creating or adapting the service mix to fit the position.

The segmentation process, shown in the following figure is concerned to divide a heterogeneous follows four broad steps:

- The definition of the market to be addressed.
- The identification of alternative bases for segmentation.
- An examination of these bases and the choice of the best base or bases for segmentation.
- The identification of individual market segments, an assessment of their attractiveness and the selection of specific target segments.

Once the market segment has been selected, the process of target marketing involves developing a positioning for the target segments selected and then developing a marketing mix for each target market.

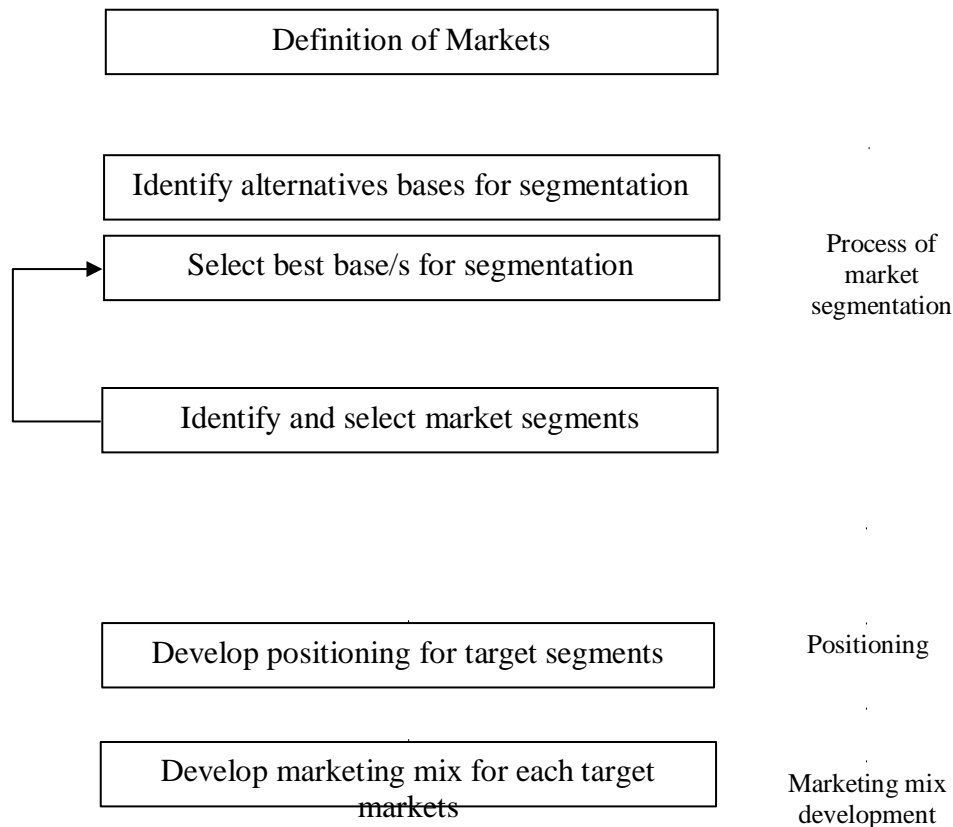


Fig. 5.1 Services market segmentation

Definition of Relevant Market

The definition of the relevant market to be addressed involves specifying the customer group to which the company is seeking to market its services. This can be a broad group such as retail customers for a supermarket in a given geographic region, or a much more specific group which can be further segmented.

Successful market segmentation means satisfying the needs of existing and potential customers in a clearly defined market. This involves understanding customer attitudes, and customer preferences, as well as the benefits which are sought. Definition of the target market and its requirements is the first essential step in the segmentation process.

Bases of Segmentations

Market segments are formed by grouping customers who share common characteristics that are in some way meaningful to the design, delivery, promotion, or pricing of the service.

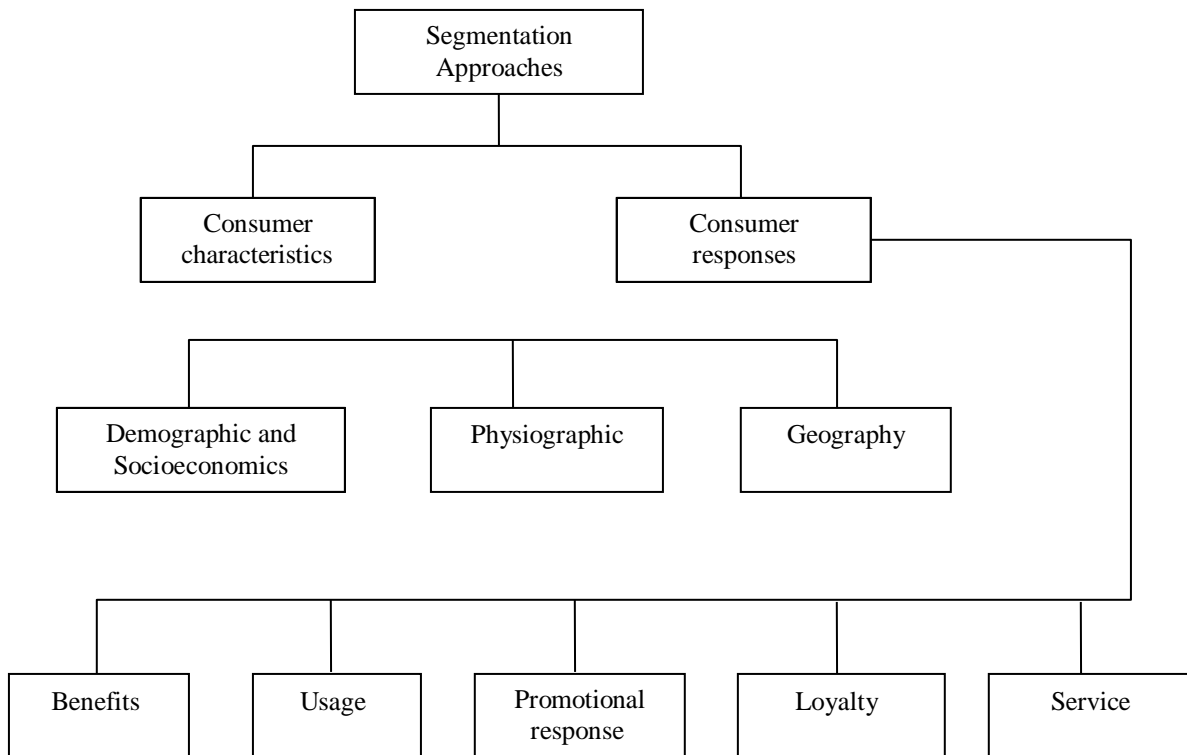


Fig 5.2

Demographics and socio-economic segmentation

Demographic segmentation includes a number of factors including sex, age, family size etc. Socio-economic variables may also be considered here, including income education, social class and ethnic origins. Many retail stores target different customer group.

Psychographic segmentation

This form of segmentation cannot be explained in clearly defined quantitative measures it is concerned with people’s behaviour and ways of living..

Geographic segmentation

Geographic segmentation divides customers according to where they live or work and correlates this with other variables.

A geographic analysis is a relatively simple means of segmenting a market, it is frequently one of the first segmentation variables to be considered by a service firm Geographic segmentation dimensions are typically grouped into market scope factor and geographic market measures.

1. Market scope factors include a consideration of where the markets to be served are located: this maybe local, national, regional or global.

2. Geographic market measures include examination of population density, climate-related factors, and standardized market areas. Geographic measures are especially important in the selection of specialized mass communications media.

Benefit segmentation

The segmentation variables listed above focus on the personal attributes of the customer. Segmentation can also be carried out on the basis of the customer's response.

Usage segmentation

Usage segmentation focuses on the type and extent of usage patterns. Consumers are typically divided into heavy users, medium users, occasional users or non-users of the service being considered.

Promotional response segmentation

Promotional response segmentation considers how customers respond to a particular form of promotional activity. This may include response to advertising, sales promotions, in-store displays and exhibitions.

Segmentation by service

One area which has received relatively little attention is the consideration of how customers respond to varying service offerings..

Segmenting markets by service involves addressing the following issues:

- Can groupings of customers be identified with similar service requirements?
- Can we differentiate our service offering?
- Do all our products require the same level of service?

The types of segmentation outlined above are illustrative of the main forms of segmentation used by services companies. they are, however, by no means exhaustive. The segmentation process should result in one of four basic decisions being reached:

1. The service firm may be decide to target one segment of the market.
2. The service firm may decide to target several segments and so will develop different marketing mix plans for each segment.
3. Management may decide not to segment the market bout to offer the service to he mass market. This may be appropriate if the market is very small and single portion would not be profitable. It also may be the case that the service company dominates the market so that targeting a few segments would not increase volume or profit.
4. Analysis may show that there is no viable market niche for the service offering.

The relevance of market segmentation if now being increasingly recognized in the services sector.

Positioning and Differentiation of Services

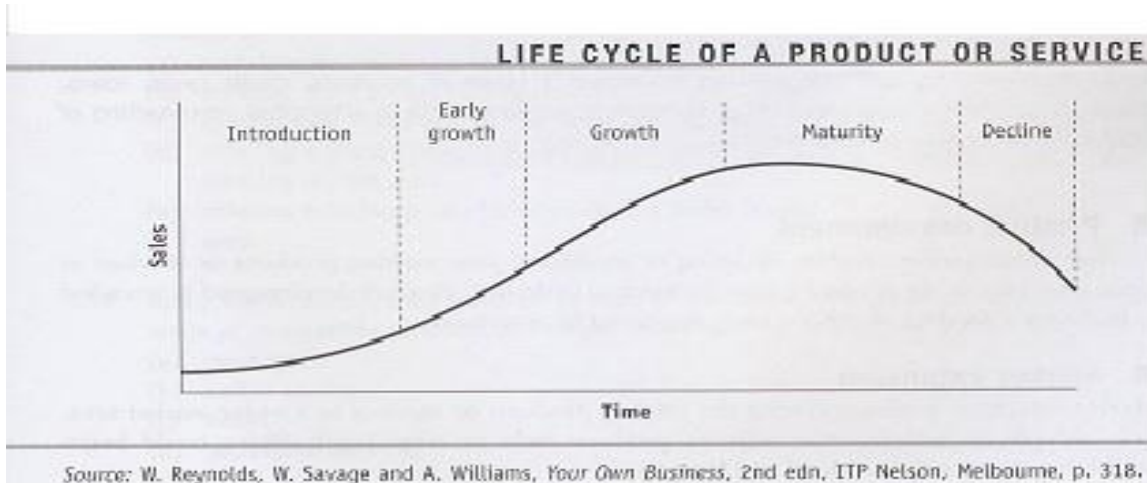
Services firms are not identifying their key market segments and then determining how they wish consumers to perceive both their company and its products and services. Positioning can be defined as follows:

“Positioning is concerned with the identification, development and communication of a differentiated advantage which makes the organization’s products and services perceived as superior and distinctive to those of its competitors in the mind of its target customers.”

It is therefore important to select distinguishing characteristics which satisfy the following criteria:

- Importance – the difference is highly valued to a sufficiently large market
- Distinctiveness – the difference is distinctly superior to other offering which are available.
- Communicability – it is possible to communicate the difference in a simple and strong way.
- Superiority – the difference is not easily copied by competitors.
- Affordability – the target customers will be able and willing to pay for the difference. Any additional cost of the distinguishing characteristic(s) will be perceived as sufficiently valuable to compensate for any additional cost.
- Profitability- the company will achieve additional profits as a result of introducing the difference

CHAPTER – 3
SERVICE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
SERVICE LIFE CYCLE



SERVICE LIFE CYCLE

The service life cycle consists of the same four stages at the product life cycle: introduction, growth, maturity and decline. The characteristics of each stage are the same. The only difference lies in the strategies that can be used.

I INTRODUCTORY STAGE

A new service or a new form of a current service is said to be in the introductory stage when it is first offered. As with goods, many new services never obtain acceptance by customers and never get past the first stage of the service life cycle. An advantage that services have over goods is that many new services can be introduced on a small scale and expanded if acceptance grows. This small scale introduction reduces the financial risk associated with the introduction, making failure less costly.

II GROWTH STAGE

During the growth stage, the industry is growing rapidly. Most firms offering the new service are seeing a positive cash flow.

For eg: a patient can learn about the incubation period for chicken pox by either talking to a nurse or dialing into a vast library of prerecorded tapes. Second, patients can seek advice about routine illnesses such as congestion or abdominal pain.

III MATURITY STAGE

During the maturity stage, industry sales level off. Competition becomes very intense since the only way a firm can gain the market share or increase sales is to take them away from a competitor. The result of this increased competition is a decrease in overall industry profits. Weaker firms will be shaken out of the industry. At this stage in the service life cycle, consumers see very few distinguishable characteristics among the various firms in a service industry.

IV DECLINE STAGE

During the decline stage, industry sales decline. This sales drop is often due to a new technology that has been developed. For eg, typewriter repair services declined bcoz typewriters were largely replaced by computers which resulted in a need for a computer service technicians and computer programmers.

Companies with services in the decline part of the life cycle have five options: divest, harvest, prune, retrench, or rejuvenate.

- a. When using the divestment option, timing is a critical decision. The highest price can be obtained if the divestment decision is made early in the decline stage or even in the latter part of the maturity stage.
- b. A second strategy available to firms is to harvest the service. A harvesting strategy implies the firm wants to reduce expenditures as far as possible to extract as much profit from the service as possible. Recognizing demand will continue to fall allows a firm to reap the maximum profit possible before the service is discontinued or sold. Due to labour intensive nature of services, this strategy is seldom used.
- c. A third strategy is pruning. **Pruning** involves reducing the number of services offered by a firm. The most unprofitable services are discontinued while the most profitable services are kept. Pruning is a common strategy for service operations.
- d. **Retrenchment** is a fourth strategy and it involves selling off or closing the unprofitable accounts while keeping or expanding the profitable ones. This strategy is good for large firms with multiple outlets and for the business-to-business service sector.

Developing Brand new services:

New Service Characteristics:

Since services are intangible, it has to have 4 basic characteristics:

1. It must be objective, not subjective
2. It must be precise, not vague.
3. It must be fact driven, not opinion driven.
4. It must be methodological, not philosophical.

NEW SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS/ STAGES:

I Front End Planning:

a. Business Strategy Development:

The first Step is to review the vision and mission of the company.

b. New Service Strategy Development:

The product portfolio strategy and a defined organizational structure for new product / service development are critical for the foundation of success. (Possibility in terms of markets, types of services, time horizon, profit criteria).

OFFERINGS	MARKETS	
	Current customers	New customers
Existing services	Share Building	Market development
New Services	Service Development	Diversification

The framework allows an organization to identify possible directions for growth.

Offerings are some of the most common approaches.

- There should be formal mechanism for ensuring an ongoing stream of new service possibilities.
- The mechanism may include a formal new service development department with responsibility for generating new ideas, suggestion boxes for employees, customers, new service development teams to identify new services.

c. Idea Generation:

Formal brainstorming, solicitation of ideas from employees and customers, lead-users researchers and learning about competitors.

d. Service Concept development and evaluation:

❖ After clear definition of the concept, it is important to produce a description of the service that represents its specific features and then to determine initial customer and employee responses to the concept.

e. Business Analysis:

❖ Assuming the service concept is favourably evaluated by customers and employees at the concept development stage, the next step is to determine its feasibility and potential profit implications.

❖ This stage will involve preliminary assumptions about the costs of hiring and training personnel delivery system enhancements, facility changes.

❖ The organization will pass the results of the business analysis through its profitability and feasibility screen to determine whether the new service idea meets the minimum requirements.

II IMPLEMENTATION:

f. Service development and testing:

It involves construction of product prototype and testing for consumer acceptance.

During this phase, the concept is refined to the point where a detailed service blueprint representing the implementation plan for the service can be produced.

g. Market testing:

The new service may be offered to employees of the organization and their families for a time to assess their responses to variations in marketing mix.

At this stage, pilot study has to be done for the service, to be sure that the operational details are functioning smoothly.

h. Commercialization:

At this stage, the service goes live and introduced to the market place.

- The first is to build and maintain acceptance of the new service among large numbers of service delivery personnel who will be responsibility day-to-day for service quality.

- To monitor all aspects of the service during introduction and through the complete service cycle.

i. Post introduction evaluation:

At this stage, the information gathered during commercialization of the service can be viewed and changes made to the delivery process, staffing or marketing –mix variables on the basis of actual offering to the market response.

SERVICE BLUEPRINTING:

MEANING:

- ❖ A service blueprint is a picture or map that accurately portrays the service system so that the different people can understand.
- ❖ It is useful at the design and redesign stages of service development.
- ❖ It visually displays the service by simultaneously depicting the process of service delivery, the points of customer contact, the roles of customers and employees.

BLUEPRINTING COMPONENTS:

Line of interaction:

It represents direct interactions between the customer and the organization.

Ex: Initial interview, intermediate meetings.

Line of visibility:

This line separates all service activities that are visible to the customer from those that are not visible.

Line of internal interaction:

It separates contact employee activities from those of other service support activities and people.

Ex: Blueprint for express mail delivery services.

BUILDING A BLUEPRINT:

STEP -1:

Blueprints can be developed at a variety of levels and there needs to be agreement on the starting point. Identifying the process to be mapped will be determined by the underlying purpose of building the blueprint.

STEP-2:

A common rationale for market segmentation is that each segments needs are different and therefore will require variations in the service features once any level of detail is reached, separates blueprints should be developed to avoid confusion and maximize their usefulness.

STEP-3:

This step involves charting the choices and actions that the customer performs / experiences in purchasing, consuming and evaluating the service.

STEP-4:

In case of technology-delivered services, the required actions of the technology interface will be mapped above the line of visibility.If no employees are involved in the service at all, then the area can be

reabeled “onstage technology actions”. If both human and technology interactions, those activities “onstage contact employee actions”

STEP-5:

Here the line of internal interaction can then be drawn and linkages from contact activities to internal support function can be identified.

STEP-6:

Finally, the evidence of service can be added to the blueprint to illustrate what it is that the customer sees and receives as tangible evidence of the service at each step in the customer experience.

BENEFITS OF SERVICE BLUEPRINTING:

1. It provides an overview of the service
2. It provides a basis for identifying and assessing cost, revenue and capital invested in each element of the service.
3. It facilitates top-down, bottom-up approach to quality improvement.

SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality is the assessment of quality is done during the service delivery processes.

Service Quality:

It is an attitude formed by a long-term overall evaluation of a firm’s performance.

Quality:

“The quality of service is the degree of conformance of all the relevant features and characteristics of service to all the aspects of customer needs limited by the price and delivery he/she will accept.”

Quality may be judged from the following:

- 1) Design reflected through the relevant feature and characteristics of service.
- 2) Satisfaction of customer needs
- 3) Production and delivery of service

PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE QUALITY:

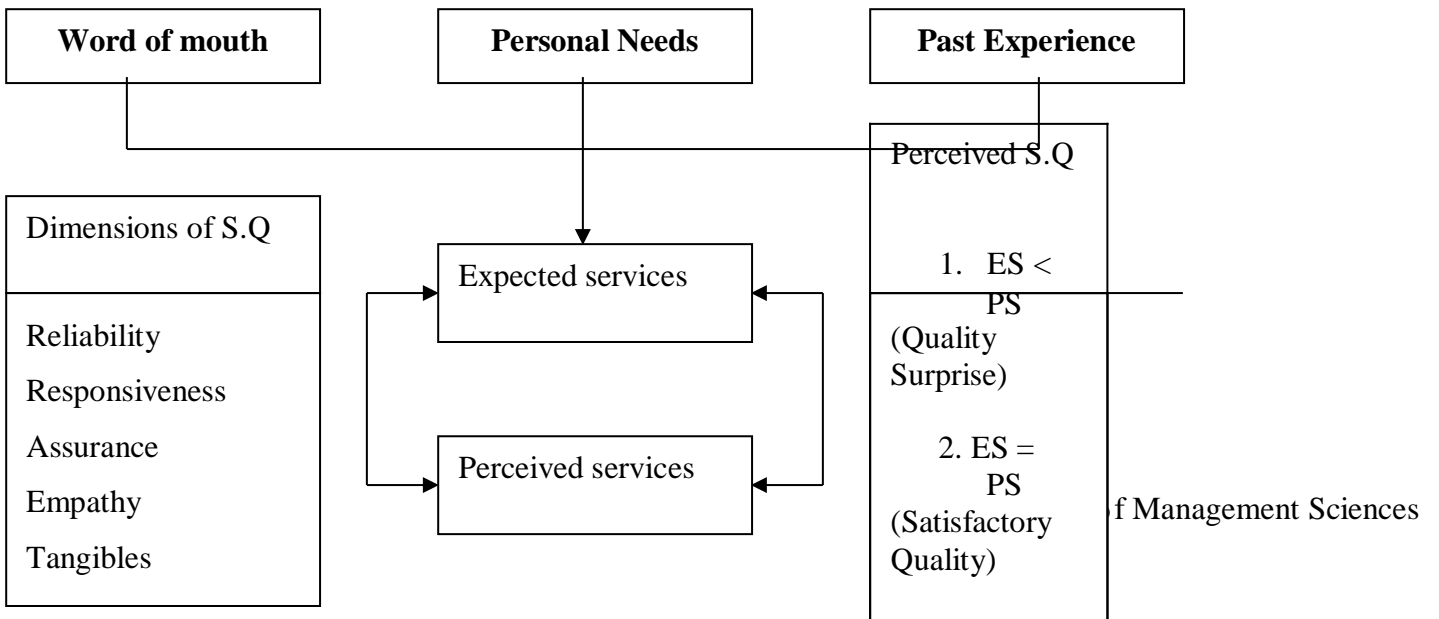
- ❖ S.Q is more difficult for the consumer to evaluate than the quality of goods.

- ❖ It is based on consumer perception.
- ❖ Service quality perception result from a comparison of what the customer expected prior to the service and the perceived level of service received.

UNDERSTANDING SERVICE AND GOODS QUALITY CHARACTERISTICS:

Quality	Definition	Examples	
		Consumer	Business
Search quality	Evaluated prior purchase	Shoes, jeans	Tools, components
Experience quality	Evaluated during/after service	Catering services	Repair services
Credence quality	Evaluation is difficult even after consumption	Education	Consultancy services

DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY



DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY:

1. **TANGIBLES:** This includes the service provider's physical facilities, their equipments and the appearance of employees.

E.g. park Sheraton, interior design, menu card, staff appearance

2. **RELIABILITY:** It is the ability of the service firm to perform the service promised dependably and accurately.

E.g. catering services

3. **ASSURANCE:** It refers to the knowledge and courtesy of the employees of companies and their ability to inspire trust and confidence in the customer mind.

E.g. BPO service

4. **EMPATHY:** It is the caring individualized attention the service firm providers to each customer.

E.g. Medical service

5. **RESPONSIVENESS:** It is the willingness of the firm's staff to help customers and to provide them prompt service.

E.g. Airline service, Enquiry desk

PERSPECTIVES OF SERVICE QUALITY:

1. Transcendent View – Quality judged

E.g. Medical service experience

2. Product based View – Quality depends on each service

E.g. Saloon ingredients

3. User based View – Quality lies in the eyes of the user

E.g. Education

4. Manufacturing View – Quality based productivity

E.g. BPO services

5. Value based View – Service quality is judged in terms of value and prices
E.g. Transport services

THE CHAIN OF CONFORMANCE:

SERVQUAL

It means service quality. It is the instrument which is used to measure service quality.

The instrument was based on the promise that service quality is the difference between customer expectations and their evaluation of the service they received.

It is a test instrument which consists of various questions. The first part of the questionnaire asks the customer to indicate the level of service they would expect from a firm in a particular industry.

The second part of the questionnaire asks the customer to evaluate the service performed by a specific service firm. Service quality is equal perceived service score – customer expectation.

This method of determining service quality is called GAP theory.

MEASURING AND IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY

1. SOFT MEASURE:

They can't be easily observed and must be collected by talking to customers, employees:

SERVQUAL can be used to measure

- a. On going surveys
- b. Employee surveys
- c. Mystery shopping
- d. Focus group discussion

2. HARD MEASURE:

They refer to operational procedures and include data as service response time, failures rates and delivery costs

E.g. how many minutes a customers had to wait in line to get the service?

TOOLS FOR ANALYSING THE SERVICE QUALITY PROBLEM

1. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS. THE FISH BONE DIAGRAM

Diag1: cause and effect chart for flight departure delays.

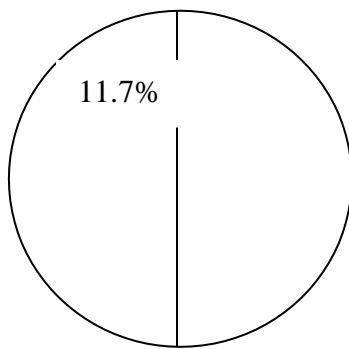
1. Late food service, Late fuel – materials
2. Back stage personnel – Late cabin cleaners
3. Information – Poor announcement of departures
4. Procedures – Delayed check in procedures, acceptance of late passengers
5. Front stage personnel – Too few agents, agents arrive late agents under trained.
6. Facilities – Air craft late to gate.
7. Customers – arrive late
8. Others – weather air traffic

2. THE PARETO ANALYSIS: 80% of quality is maintained by monitory 20% of the activities.

E.g. Customer enquiry

3. BLUE PRINTING

It enables us to visualize the process of service delivery by depicting the sequence of front stage enter actions that customer's experience.



. depending upon how the data were elicited and which statistical procedures were used. Usually two dimensions are used on positioning maps and these often account for a large proportion of the 'explanation' of the customer's preferences.

Products or services are typically plotted on a two dimensional positioning map such as show in the following figure. The positioning map can be used to identify the position of competitors' services in relation to the selected attributes. The analysis can be further developed by drawing separate positioning maps for each market segment. Customers in each market segment may perceive the service and its benefits differently and different map will show these different positions.

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Diag1: Gaps model of service quality

GAP 1: Not knowing what customer expects

2. Not selecting right customer design & standards
3. Not delivering the service standards
4. Not matching performance with promises.

FACTORS LEADING PROVIDER GAP 1:

Co. perception of customer expectation

a) Inadequate Marketing Research Orientation

- Insufficient marketing research
- Research not focused service quality
- Inadequate use of market research

b) Lack of upward communication:

- Lack of interaction between management and customers
- Insufficient communication between contact employees and managers
- Too many layers between contact personnel and top management

c) Insufficient relationship focus:

- Lack of market segmentation

- Focuses on transaction rather than relationships
- Focuses on new customers rather than existing customers

d) Inadequate service recovery:

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GAP1:

The emphasis on acquiring new customers should be changed in order to retain the old customers.

GAP 2:

Three factors leading to provider gap 2

Customer driven service design and standards.

a) Poor service design:

- ➔ Unsystematic new service development process
- ➔ Undefined service design
- ➔ Failure to connect service design to service positioning

b) Absence of customer defined standards:

- ➔ Absence of process management to focus on customer requirement
- ➔ Absence of formal process for getting service quality goals.

c) Inappropriate physical evidence and service scale:

- ➔ Management perception of customer expectation

HOW TO REDUCE GAP 2:

1. Design clearly without over simplification, incompleteness and subjectivity.
2. Develop effective strategies for new service and use service ability as an implication tool.
3. Develop customer defined service standards
4. Design physical evidence to meet customer expectation.

PROVIDER GAP 3:

This is the discrepancy between development of customer driven standards and actual service performance by company employees.

REASONS LEADING TO PROVIDER GAP 3:

a) Deficiency in HR policies:

- ★ Ambiguity and role conflicts
- ★ Inappropriate evaluation and compensation system
- ★ Lack of empowerment perceived control and team work

b) Failure to match supply and demand:

- ★ Inappropriate customer mix
- ★ Over lies on price
- ★ Failures to smooth peaks and barriers

c) Customers are not fulfilling:

- ★ Customer's ignorance of responsibilities
- ★ Customers negatively affect each other
- ★ Problems with service intermediaries
- ★ Channel conflict
- ★ Difficulty in controlling quality and consistency
- ★ Tension between empowerment and control

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GAP 3:

Ensure that all the resources is needed to achieve standards are in place

PROVIDER GAP 4:

This is the difference between service delivery and service provider's external communication

REASONS: service delivery

a) Lack of integrated service marketing communication:

- √ Not including interactive marketing plans
- √ Absence of strong marketing program
- √ Tendency to view each external communication as independent

b) Ineffective management of customer expectation:

√ Not managing the customer expectation in communication

c) Over promising through advertisements

d) Inadequate horizontal communication:

√ Differences in policies and procedures across the branches

√ Insufficient communication between advertising and operation

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GAP 4:

Improved service delivery through communication

CHAPTER-4

SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROMOTION

Process of Positioning

Product positioning involves a number of steps including the following:

Determining levels of positioning

Identification of key attributes of importance to selected segments

Location of attributes on a positioning map

Evaluating positioning options

Implementing positioning.

Determining levels of positioning

The first step in positioning is to determine which level(s) – service level, product sector level, corporate level – are to receive explicit positioning attention. Some examples will illustrate the choices that are made by some service organizations. The level or levels of positioning to be undertaken are usually

. depending upon how the data were elicited and which statistical procedures were used. Usually two dimensions are used on positioning maps and these often account for a large proportion of the ‘explanation’ of the customer’s preferences.

Products or services are typically plotted on a two dimensional positioning map such as show in the following figure. The positioning map can be used to identify the position of competitors’ services in relation to the selected attributes. The analysis can be further developed by drawing separate positioning maps for each market segment. Customers in each market segment may perceive the service and its benefits differently and different map will show these different positions.

fairly clear out, although some organisation, have placed different emphasis on these levels at different points in time.

Identification of attributes Once the level of positioning has been determined it is necessary to identify the specific attributes that are important to the chosen market segments. In particular, the way in which purchasing decisions are made should be considered. Individuals use different criteria fro making a purchase decision of a service.

Location of attributes on positioning map

The positioning process involves the identification of the most important attribute and location of various companies' services, for these attributes, on a positioning map. Where a range of attributes are identified, statistical procedures exist for combining these attributes into aggregate dimensions. Such dimensions are referred to by various names such as principal components, multi-dimensional scales, factors etc. depending upon how the data were elicited and which statistical procedures were used. Usually two dimensions are used on positioning maps and these often account for a large proportion of the 'explanation' of the customer's preferences.

Products or services are typically plotted on a two dimensional positioning man such as show in the following figure. The positioning map can be used to identify the position of competitors' services in relation to the selected attributes. The analysis can be further developed by drawing separate positioning maps for each market segment. Customers in each market segment may perceive the service and its benefits differently and different map will show these different positions.

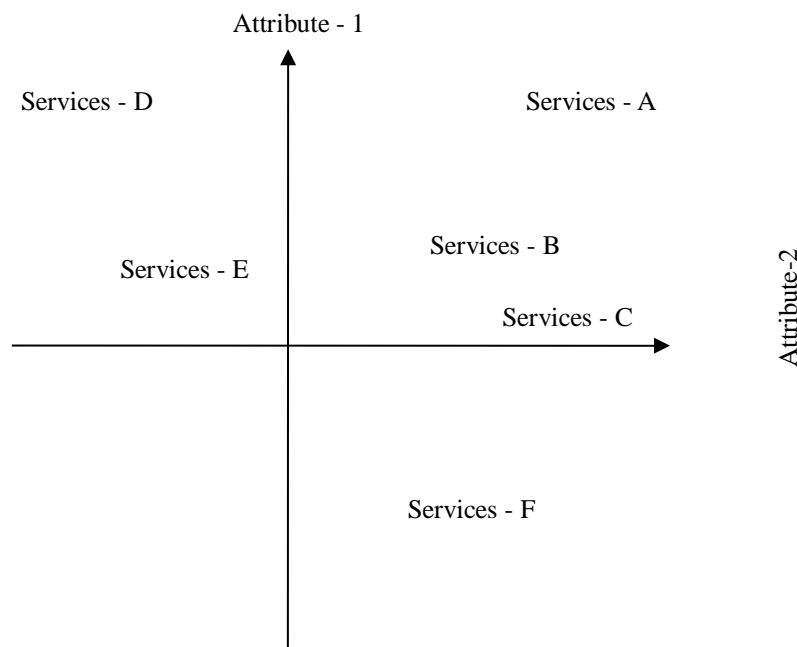


Fig. 6.1 Illustrative positioning man

Positioning maps can be based on either objective attributes or subjective attributes. Maps can also use a combination of objective and subjective attributes.

Evaluation positioning options

- Strengthening current position against competitors to avoid head-on attack.
- Identifying an unoccupied market position that was not filled by a competitor
- Repositioning the competition.

Once a company had identified where it is positioned at present, it then needs to determine how to enhance or sustain its position relative to its competitors.

Criteria for good positioning

- The positioning should be meaningful.
- The positioning must be believable.
- The positioning must be unique.

Implementing positioning and the marketing mix

How a company and service is positioned needs to be communicated throughout all of its implicit and explicit interactions with customers. This suggests that all elements of the company, its staff, policies and image, need to reflect a similar image which together conveys the desired position to the marketplace. This means that a company must establish a strategic positioning direction, which is followed through in all of its tactical marketing and sales activities.

A successful positioning strategy should make the service clearly distinguishable by features which are desirable and important to the target customer segment. This means that the positioning strategy should be examined from time to time to ensure that it does not become outdated and that it is still relevant to the target market segment.

The marketing mix is the key to implementing a positioning strategy. The design of the marketing mix to implement the positioning must be based on the key salient attributes relevant to the target segment. These attributes should be identified in the context of analysis of competitors, whose positions should be assessed to discover their vulnerability. All the elements of the marketing mix can be utilized to influence the customer's perception and hence the positioning of the product or organization concerned.

The marketing mix can be used to develop a coherent totality that creates the positioning in the customer's mind.

Importance of Positioning

Positioning involves both launching new brands into the marketplace (new brand positioning), and repositioning old brands. It is concerned with the differentiation of products and services and ensuring that they do not degenerate into a commodity. To maximize its potential a company should position itself in its core market segments, where it is objectively or subjectively differentiated in a positive way over competing offerings.

Positioning is particularly important for services in the market. As a result of competitive pressure the consumer is becoming increasingly confused by the huge offering of services within each market sector. These offerings are communicated by a vast number of advertising messages promoting different features of the services. The key to a successful positioning strategy is to promote the feature which the company is best and which exactly matches the needs of the customer.

Because of intangibility and other features associated with services, consumers find that differentiation of services can be more difficult and complex. Successful positioning makes it easier for the customer to see a company's services as being different from others and exactly what is wanted.

Positioning is a strategic marketing tool which allows managers to determine what their position is now, what they wish it to be and what actions are needed to attain it. This permits market opportunities to be identified, by considering positions which are not met by competitors' products. It therefore helps influence both product development and the redesign of existing products. It also allows consideration of competitor's possible moves and responses so that appropriate action can be taken. The concept is often considered at the product level although it is also relevant at the product sector and organizational level. Positioning involves giving the target market segment the reason for buying your services and thus underpins the whole marketing strategy. It also offers guidelines for development of a marketing mix with each element of it being consistent with the positioning.

Positioning services in competitive markets

Services represent

- a. Speed with which service is delivered to the quality of interaction between customers and service personnel.
- b. Convenience – service delivered at convenient location, available at convenient times.

Positioning strategy:

It is concerned with creating and maintaining distinctive differences that will be noticed and valued by those customers with whom the firm would most like to develop long-term relationship.

It requires to understand

- a. Target customers preferences
- b. Characteristics of their competitors offerings.

I. Focus underlies the search for competitive analysis:

As competition intensifies in the service sector, it's becoming ever more important for service organizations to differentiate their products in ways that are meaningful to customers. It is not realistic for a firm to try to appeal to all potential buyers in a market because

- (i) The customers vary in their needs purchasing behaviour, consumption pattern and geographically wide spread.

Important Vs. Determinant attributes:

Determinant attributes:

These are the attributes that determine buyer's choice among competing alternatives that are important to purchases, which customers see significant differences among competing alternatives.

Ex: Airlines – Convenience of departure

Convenience of arrival time

Availability of frequent flyer

Case of making reservations.

Important Attributes

- Price which is quantitative and can be measured.

Positioning distinguishes a brand from its competitors:

Competitive positioning strategy is based on establishing and maintaining a distinctive place in the market for an organisation / individual product offerings.

1. A company must establish a position in the minds of its targeted customers.
2. The position should be singular, providing one simple and consistent message.
3. The position must set a company apart from its competitors.
4. A company cannot be all things to all people; it must focus its efforts.

“Positioning needs to keep competitors out not draw them in.”

Copy positioning Vs. Product positioning

Copy positioning:

People make decisions based on their perceptions of reality rather than on an expert’s definition of reality.

Marketers associate positioning primarily with the communication elements of the marketing mix, advertising, promotions and public relations which creates good image and associations so as to give them a special distinction in the customer’s mind.

Product positioning

To improve a product’s appeal to a specific target segment, it is necessary to change its performance on certain attributes.

- Reduce its price
- Alter the times and locations when it is available.
- Performance, price, availability

Positioning role in marketing strategy:

- It plays important role because it links market analysis and competitive analysis to internal corporate analysis. [Refer pg. 66 Table 3-1 of zeithmal]
- Because services are intangible, explicit positioning strategy is valuable in helping prospective customers to get a mental fix on a product.
- The organization is pushed into a position where it faces head on competition from stronger competitors.
- The organization is pushed into a position that nobody else wants, because there is little customer demand.
- The organization's product's position is so blurred that nobody knows what its distinctive competence is.
- The organization has no position at all in the market place because nobody has ever heard of it.

CUSTOMER POSITIONING OF SERVICES

Consumer positioning of a service involves two concepts. First, it means the position the firm or organization occupies in the minds of consumers. What a company thinks is their position in the market place does not matter. Rather, it is what the consumers think that is important. Second, positioning is always relative to the competition. In choosing a service firm, consumers will compare its service offerings to other firms within the industry.

METHODS OF POSITIONING

Services can be positioned in 6 different ways. They can be positioned by service attributes, use of application, price/ quality relationship, service class, service user, or competitor.

METHODS OF POSITIONING	CONSUMER EXAMPLE	BUSINESS EXAMPLE
Service attributes	Sprint offers the clearest and Best transmission for long distance telephone calls.	J.B.Hunt offers the best on-time delivery rate for long haul shipments by truck.
Use or application	Bullet Resistant Systems Provides bulletproofing for Residences who want protection frombullets.	Imagination provides full multidisplinary communication services for business who want more than advertising development.
Price/ quality Relationship	Taco Bell offers fast food customers a cheap, quality meal.	Ernest & young offers a high quality accounting service.
Service Class	Hilton is the best alternative In the down town, business convention market.	Access Health Marketing is a new firm in the medical telephone counseling industry.
Service User	Viacom’s WLTW of Newyork is the radio station of choice for 25 to 54 years old females.	Midwest Express offersthe highest level of service quality For business airline travelers.
Competitor	Avis provides an excellent alternative to hertz.	Eurostar provides travelers an excellent alternative transportation method from Paris to London.

Service attributes involve positioning the service in terms of what it does best. For instance, Federal Express tries to position itself as the best firm for “overnight delivery” while UPS tries to position itself as the best firm for “package delivery”.

Use or application can be used for positioning. Fitness centres are often positioned in this way. Some fitness centres will cater to individuals who want to reduce weight, while others position themselves for individuals who want to exercise or on weight lifting or conditioning. Each position targets a different market segment and requires a unique combination of equipment and physical facility design.

Price- Quality relationship can also be used for positioning a firm.

The fourth means of consumer positioning is by **service class**. Pizza Hut wants to be positioned as a ‘dine-in restaurant’, not a fast-food restaurant. Their advertisements often state they are “ the best dine-in restaurant in the pizza industry”.

Some services are positioned according to **service users**. Service providers can also position themselves relative to a **competitor**.

POSITIONING MAPS

Position mapping involves graphically mapping a firm and its competitors relative to the two major purchase criteria. To be of benefit, the axis of the graph needs to be the two most important criteria consumers use in choosing a vendor from within an industry. For trucking firms, the most important criteria may be on-time delivery rate and cost. For a professional service such as surgery, the most important criteria may be competence and availability.

The position map allows a company to see what position they occupy in the mind of consumers relative to their competition. For a potential new entrant into the market, the position map will show possible gaps that are not currently being served by anyone. The map may also suggest a new position for a firm currently in the market.

Steps in positioning:

STEP -1: DETERMINE THE CORRECT POSITION:

The first step in determining the correct position for a service is to identify the firm's competitors. It is important to look at competition from a consumer's view point. In making a purchase decision, what vendors do consumers consider? The list of vendors generated is the competing firms.

STEP-2: ASSESS CONSUMER PERCEPTION:

The second step in the process is to assess consumers' perceptions of each firm in the industry. Consumer perceptions are crucial in positioning. The position a firm believes they occupy or the position they would like to occupy is irrelevant at this point.

STEP-3: DETERMINE THE POSITION OF EACH FIRM:

Based on information gained from consumers, the third step is to determine the position of each firm within the industry. Using the position map is an excellent method of doing this. The map will allow firms to see where they are relative to their competition.

STEP-4: ANALYSING CONSUMER PREFERENCES:

The fourth step in determining the correct consumer position is to analyze consumer preferences. This information is difficult to obtain but is important in making a positioning decision. Analyzing consumer preferences involves determining why consumers prefer one firm over another.

STEP-5 MAKING CONSUMER POSITION DECISION:

Based on the information gained, a firm is ready for the fifth step; making a consumer position decision. The decision may be to remain positioned where it is. However, if a firm is unhappy with the position it occupies in consumers' minds, it may want to reposition itself. In choosing a new position, firms must be very careful. Changing the position of a firm in consumers' minds is very difficult since positions become very entrenched. Consumers have to be convinced that what they believe about a firm in reference to its competition is wrong or that it must be modified.

STEP-6: DEVELOP A STRATEGY:

The final step in the process is to develop a strategy to implement the new position or to reinforce the current position.

Conduct internal market and competitor analyses:

Market analysis:

It addresses the overall level and trend of demand and the geographic location of the demand.

Research may be needed to gain a better understanding of not only customer needs and preferences within each of the different segments but also how each segment perceives the competition.

Internal corporate analysis:

It focuses on identifying the organizations resources [financial, human labor, physical assets] any limitations, it's goals [profitability, growth, professional preferences] and how it's value shape the way it does business.

From the analysis, we can select a limited no. of target market segmentation that can be served with either new/existing services.

Competitive analysis

It emphasis on the strength, weakness, may suggest opportunities for differentiation, the company can determine it's opportunities to achieve differentiation.

Position statement:

It is the outcome of integrating these 3 forms of analysis. This describes the described position of the organization in the market place.

[Refer Pg. 67 fig 3-3.]

Anticipating competitive response:

The best way to anticipating competitive response is to identify all current and potential competitors and to put oneself in their own management's shoes by conducting an internal corporate analysis for each of the firms.

Stimulate models can be done to analyse the impact of alternative competitive moves.

* How would a price cut affect demand

* How long would it take before customers responded to a new advtg campaign designed to change perceptions?

Evolutionary positioning:

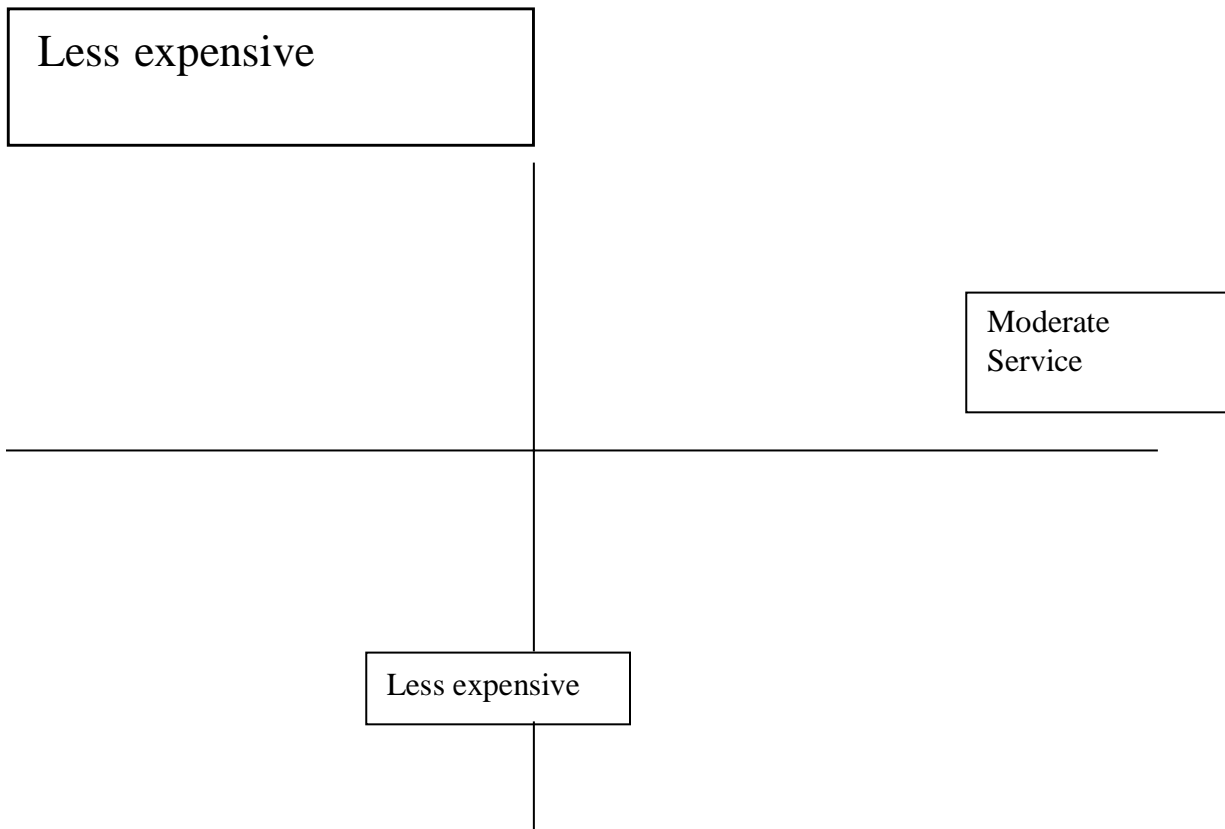
It is responding to changing market structures, technology, competitive activity. Some business lend themselves to evolutionary repositioning by adding/deleting services and target segments.

[offering extended hrs. of service, added banking services]

Use positioning maps to plot competitive strategy:

It is a perceptual mapping.

It is a useful way of representing customers perceptions of alternative products graphically.



Competitive positioning :

Firms may have to undertake significant change in an existing position. Such a strategy is known as repositioning – means revising service characteristics/ redefining target market segments]

Change perceptions through advertising:

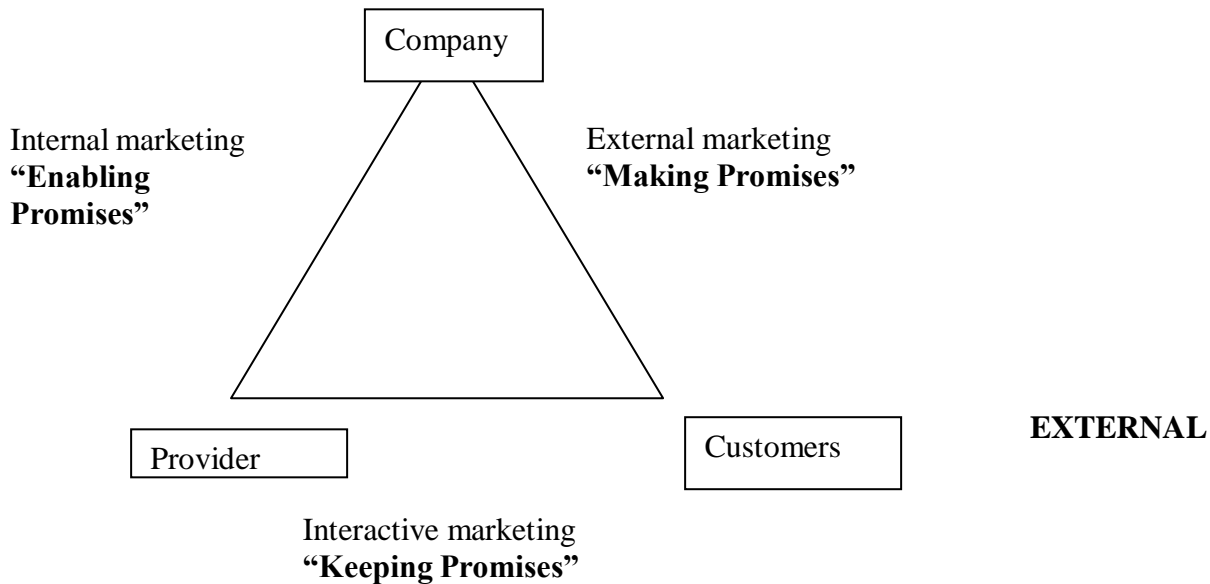
Improving negative brand perceptions may require extensive redesign of the core product/supplementary services.

Weaknesses are perceptual rather than real.

Innovation is positioning:

One way to compete is to introduce new dimensions into the positioning equation that other firms can't immediately match.

SERVICE MARKETING TRIANGLE



MARKETING:

- The Company makes promises towards customers regarding what they can expect and how it will be delivered.
- Here consistent and realistic promises should be set.

INTERACTIVE MARKETING:

- Promises which are made by external marketing must be kept.
- Service promises are kept or broke by the employees of the firm.

INTERNAL MARKETING

- In order for providers and service system to deliver on the promises made they must have skills, abilities and motivate to deliver.
- Promises are easy to make unless providers are recruited, trained, they can opt keep up promise.

PRICING

Approaches to pricing services

I COST BASED PRICING:- PROBLEMS

1. Small firms may charge too little to be viable.
2. Prices may not reflect customer value.
3. Heterogeneity limits comparability

II COMPETITOR BASED PRICING: - PROBLEMS

1. Costs are difficult to trace.
2. Labor is more difficult to price than materials.
3. Costs may not equal value.

III DEMAND BASED PRICING: - PROBLEMS

1. Information on service costs is less available to customers, hence price may not be a central factor.
2. Monetary price must be adjusted to reflect the value of nonmonetary costs.

WHAT IS REVENUE MANAGEMENT:

It means setting prices according to predicted demand levels among various market segments.

The least price sensitive segment is allocated capacity first at the highest price, followed by the next segment at a lower price.

Ex: Travelers often reserve airline seats, hotel rooms.

A good revenue management is able to predict with reasonable accuracy how many customers will want to use a service for a given slot at each of service price levels and to block the relevant amount of capacity at each level. (Price Bucket).

Effects of Competitors pricing on Because of Revenue management:

Revenue management system monitor booking pace, competitor pricing is indirectly picked up.

If a firm prices too low, it will experience a higher booking pace and its cheaper seats will fill up quickly.

A SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

This concept of providing a service that consumers feel is superior to the competition and sustainable over time is called a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA).

THE CONCEPT OF A SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

To qualify as a sustainable competitive advantage, the perceived advantage must meet four requirements.

- 1) The consumer must value the concept. An advantage that is not valued by customers will not result in additional sales.
- 2) The second condition for an SCA is that it be non substitutable. Substitutability can occur when a competitor can use a similar advantage to gain access to another firm's customers. For example, a firm may develop a strong competitive advantage due to its large number of outlets. Another firm, unable to duplicate the large number of outlets. Another firm, unable to duplicate the large number of outlets, may develop Internet, fax, or telephone access that allows customers the same relative access. Thus, the large number of outlets may no longer be a strong advantage if customers do not need to go to the facility to conduct business. Banks and financial services are now facing this situation with the increased popularity of computerized on-line banking services and internet financial services.

3) The third requirement for an SCA is that the service firms have the resources and capability of delivering the SCA to its customers. Although a particular advantage may be a goal for the firm, it cannot be developed into sustainable competitive advantage unless the firm first has the capabilities. A firm may want to be the low-price provider of a service, but unless it has the size to provide economies of scale, it will be unable to obtain that position.

4) The last requirement for an SCA is that it be sustainable, which implies it cannot be easily copied by competitors. Some type of barrier to imitation must exist. The barrier can be economies of scale, capital costs, service offerings differentiation, buyer switching costs, access to distribution channels, or experience effects.

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- 1) Must be valued by customers.
- 2) Cannot be easily substitutable.
- 3) Must have resources and capability of delivering the sustainable competitive advantage to its customers.
- 4) Must be sustainable and not easily copied by competitors.

BARRIERS TO IMITATION

Economies of scale: Example- In the fast food industry, Taco Bell has developed economies of scale that make it difficult for other fast food outlets offering Mexican food to effectively compete.

The other barriers to imitation are Capital Costs, Service Offering Differentiation, Buyer Switching Costs, Access to distribution Channels and Experience Effects.

SOURCES OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

A sustainable competitive advantage is built on a firm providing either superior resources or distinctive skills. Superior resources allow a firm to develop unique or different to imitate. Distinctive skills allow a firm's personnel to offer a service in a unique or different way. When the two are combined in a single SCA, the competitive advantage becomes even more sustainable. Sustainable competitive advantages can be achieved through a

- ❖ unique or different operational position
- ❖ scale effects, cost and demand synergy
- ❖ brand or firm equity
- ❖ customer relationships
- ❖ service package, or information technology.

MARKET DEFENDER STRATEGIES

Understanding the successful strategies used during each stage of the service life cycle is only half of the key to success. The other half is for a firm to defend its current market share from its competitors and from new firms entering the market.

A) BLOCKING STRATEGIES

The best defense strategy against competitors is to stop new firms from entering the market. Entry can be blocked by increasing the cost of success or reducing the anticipated rewards. Companies enter new markets bcoz they believe they can make a profit. If the cost of entering a new market becomes too high or the anticipated return is too low, the desire to enter is lessened. Blocking strategies available to service firms include performance guarantees, intensive advertising, controlling location or access, high switching costs, and satisfied customers.

A performance guarantee does two things. First, it says to customers that their current service provider will stand behind their promises. Second, it forces any new entrant into the market to immediately meet the same standard of performance.

Another method of blocking new entrants is an intensive advertising campaign that promotes brand name, brand awareness, and brand equity. Large service firms have the money to fund large scale promotions. Bcoz of the experiential nature of services, many consumers will choose a firm with which they are familiar. Customers are leery of unknown service firms. Building the brand awareness necessary to capture a significant portion of a market may be seen as too costly for some prospective entrants.

Controlling location or access is another method of blocking entry. It is the spatial preemptive competitive advantage discussed earlier. Firms that are first to get the prime retail locations will create a barrier to other firms desiring to enter that market. Firms that sign contractual agreements with their clients or customers make it harder for a new firm to enter. Any method a firm can use that will make it more difficult for a new competitor to have access to customers will discourage a new firm's entry.

Increasing switching costs will make a market less attractive bcoz as customer switching costs go up, customers become less willing to try a new company.

The best blocking strategy, however is to provide the service customers want and expect. Satisfied customers are reluctant to try a new service. This reluctance is especially true for services operating in the service quality and customization operational position.

B) RETALIATION STRATEGIES

It is not always possible to prevent new firms from entering a market, especially during the growth stage of the service life cycle. Once they have entered the market, then firms who are already in the market will have to switch to retaliation strategies. The goal of these strategies is to deny the new entrant the opportunity to make their anticipated or desired profit level. If profits are too low or the market potential does not appear to be attractive, the new firm will withdraw from the market. Retaliation strategies include reducing service trial, fighting aggressively to maintain market share and developing a reputation for being aggressive.

One retaliation strategy is to discourage customers from trying the new service company. Manufacturers of goods can do this by offering special promotions that encourage customers to stock up on their merchandise. Because services are perishable, this strategy is not as readily available to services. Instead, service firms must look for ways to develop long term contracts with their customers. Formal contracts are the best, but are not always possible.

Another strategy is to reduce a new entrant's profits with aggressive retaliation. Aggressive retaliation forces the new entrant to spend more time and money, which makes the market less attractive to the new entrant. Having a reputation of being aggressive may cause some companies to discontinue their market

entry plans or be content with a smaller share of the market. Citibank demonstrated aggressive retaliation when AT&T launched their universal card. Citibank cancelled its AT&T long distance service, added price protection, and tried to block other nonbank entities from entering the credit card industry. Although Citibank's retaliation did not stop AT&T from entering the market, it did lengthen the pay back period AT&T had anticipated when they entered the market. It was two full years before AT&T realized any profit and even then the profit earned was lower than anticipated.

C) ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

Adaptation strategies are used when a firm must accept that attempts to block or force out the new entrant have failed and the new firm is in the market to stay. Citibank was forced to use adaptation strategies when AT&T universal card penetrated the market. Among the adaptation strategies used to keep the new entrant from eroding a firm's market share, three strategies should be used. First, the firm can match the new entrant's offers and attempt to beat them on their own turf. This strategy may require adding new services or modifying current services to ensure that at every level they have equivalent offerings. As new firms try to develop a competitive advantage, incumbents can work to prevent the competitive advantage from being established.

A second strategy is to expand the service package to discourage customers from switching to the new entrant. By offering the customer everything, the need to switch is decreased. The danger with this approach is that in offering multiple services, the quality and expertise may be diminished. Firms that are more specialized may be able to offer a higher level of service quality and take away market share.

SERVICE CHANNEL

Issues related to distribution

Distribution-meaning:

It is the availability of and accessibility of a service to consumers.

Two service marketers are involved in delivering service through intermediaries.

2. The service principal/originator - it is the entity that creates the service concept.

3. The service deliverer/intermediary – it is the entity that interacts with the customer in the actual execution of the service.

The focus in service distribution is on identifying ways to bring the customer and principal and representatives together. The options available are

1. Franchisees
2. Agents
3. Brokers
4. Electronic channels.

Direct channel/Company owned channel

There are some services which are distributed directly from provider to customer.

Ex: Doctors, Hairstylists.

Pros:

1. Complete control over the outlets.
2. Consistency can be maintained
3. Standards can be established and monitored
4. Company can own customer relationships.

Cons:

1. It has to undergo financial risk
2. They may not be aware of the business not the markets.

Common issues involving intermediaries

a. Channel conflict over objectives and performance:

The conflict occurs because the service principal and its intermediaries are too dependent on each other.

The conflict may occur between the service provider and service intermediary in the types of channels.

b. Channel conflict over costs and rewards:

The conflict may arise in monetary arrangement between those who create the service and those who deliver the service.

c. Difficulty controlling quality and consistency across outlets:

It results in inconsistency and lack of uniform quality that results when multiple outlets deliver services, here the service provider suffers because the entire brand and reputation are jeopardized.

d. Tension between empowerment and control:

If the services are to be delivered by the franchisees, their independent ideas must be integrated according to the standards.

e. Channel ambiguity:

Who will undertake market research to identify customer requirements the company or intermediary?

Who determines the standards for service delivery, the franchiser or the franchisee.

Electronic channels in action/innovative application of the web, internet and other electronic channels.

a. Interactive television:

It is an electronic channel that has been developed in many different forms, but essentially consists of television where the viewer participates actively rather than passively receiving the information. While a customer watches TV, a small icon will appear in the corner of the screen on various channels. When the customer clicks the remote a menu of information will show.

b. Super ATMS:

These are the ATMs that show movie clips and commercials while you wait for money. This will allow you to book flights and print tickets for airlines.

c. ON-LINE TRAVEL:

Prices are more competitive than offline price. No inventory cost. Advertising revenue.

Ex: Travelocity.com it sells airline tickets, hotel rooms directly to consumers avoiding agents.

d. Investing online

PEOPLE

Here we focus on service employees and human resource practices that facilitate delivery of quality services.

The failure to deliver services as designed and specified can result from a no. of employees and human performance factors

- a. Ineffective recruitment of service
- b. Role ambiguity
- c. Role conflict among contact employees.
- d. Poor employee-technology fit.
- e. Inappropriate evaluation and compensation systems.
- f. Lack of empowerment
- g. Perceived team work
- h. Team work

a. Employees are the service:

Investing in the employee to improve the service parallels making a direct investment in the improvement of a manufactured product/service.

Ex: hair cutting, child care

b. Employees are the brand:

Even off-duty employees, such as flight attendants/restaurant employees on a break, reflect on the organization they represent.

c. Employees are the marketers:

Contact employees represent the organization and can directly influence customer satisfaction, they perform the role of marketers.

Ex: Bank Tellers

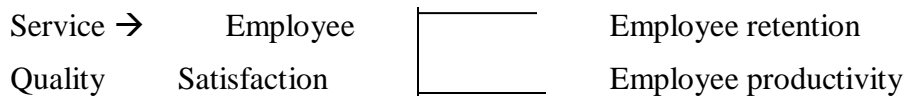
d. Employees are the organization in the customer's eyes:

Even if the contact employee doesn't perform the service entirely, he/she may still represent the firm in the customers' eye.

Ex: Health clinic

Service Profit Chain:

Internal



The five dimensions of service quality is delivered by people.

a. Reliability:

Delivering the service as promised is totally within the control of front-line employees.

b. Responsiveness:

Employees directly influence customer perceptions of responsiveness through their personal willingness to help and their promptness in serving customers.

c. Assurance:

Communicate about the service credibility and to inspire trust and confidence. This dimension is highly dependent on the employees ability. It reflects the reputation of the organization.

d. Empathy:

Here employees will pay attention, listen, adapt and be flexible in delivery what individual customer needs.

e. Tangibles:

The service facility, brochures are the tangibles available for the service provider to deliver the service.

Emotional labor:

This was coined by Arlie Hochschild. It refers to the labor that goes beyond the physical and mental skills needed to deliver quality service.

- Delivering smiles
- Making eye contact
- Showing sincere interest
- Engaging in friendly conversation with people

Therefore, friendliness, courtesy, empathy and responsiveness directed toward customers all require huge amount of emotional labor from front-line employees.

Reducing stress of excessive emotional labor:

1. Providing good physical working condition
2. Scheduled break
3. job rotating

Sources of conflict

Front-line employees often face interpersonal and inter organizational conflicts on the job.

a. Person/role conflict:

In some situations, boundary spanners feel conflicts between what they are asked to do and their own personalities, values.

It arises when employees are required to wear specific clothing to confirm job requirements.

b. Organisation/client conflict:

Here conflict arises when employees have 2 bosses, organization and the individual customer.

When a customer makes excessive demands, the employee has to choose whether to follow the rules or satisfy the demands.

The conflict is greatest when the employee believes the organization is wrong in its policies and must decide whether to accommodate the client/losing the job.

c. Inter-client conflict:

This occurs when there are incompatible expectations and requirements from 2 or more customers.

Ex: Teachers

- Providers may satisfy one customer by spending additional time.
- Customizing service
- Bring very flexible in meeting customers needs
- The waiting customers are becoming dissatisfied, b'z they are not met on a timely way.

Quality/productivity trade-off:

Here front-line service workers are asked to be both effective and efficient. They are expected to deliver satisfying service to customers and at the same time to be cost-effective and productive in what they do.

Thus essential trade-offs between quality and quantity and between maximum effectiveness and efficiency, place real-time demands and pressures on service employees.

CHAPTER – 5

SERVICE STRATEGIES

Tourism and Travel Marketing

Tourism is a major industry throughout the world today. It embraces activities ranging from the smallest sea-side hotel, for example, to airlines, multinational hotel chains and major international tour operators.

The concept of tourism marketing comprises of:

- Identifying and anticipating consumer demand (and desire) for tourism products and services
- Developing a means of providing products and services to fulfill these needs
- Communicating this to the consumer, thereby motivating sales, consequently satisfying both the consumer, and the organization's objectives.

Krippendorf says, "Marketing in tourism is to be understood as the systematic and coordinated execution of business policy by tourist undertakings whether private or state, owned at local, regional, national and international levels to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the needs of identifiable consumer groups and in doing so achieves an appropriate return".

Burkart and Medlick opine, "Tourism marketing activities are systematic and coordinated efforts extended by National Tourism Organisation and / or tourist enterprises at international, national and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourist groups and individuals in view of sustained tourism growth."

In view of the above, the following points emerge regarding tourism marketing:

- Tourism marketing is a process of creating a product or providing a service.
- Tourism marketing comprises fact finding, data gathering, analyzing (marketing research), communication to inform and promote (Promotion), ensuring and facilitating sales, selection of marketing planning (distribution), coordination, control and evaluation (marketing planning and auditing), developing professionally sound personnel (people).
- Tourism marketing is an integral effort to satisfy tourism and more so, it is a device to transform the potential tourism into the actual tourism.
- Tourism marketing is the safest way to generate demand, expand market and increase the market share.
- Tourism marketing is a managerial process to promote business.

Through market planning, segmentation and marketing research, a tourism marketing mix can be developed to achieve the tourism organization's goals through strategic marketing.

Market segmentation

In tourism marketing segments may be categorized according to age, frequency of travel, education, occupation or income. Other bases for segmentation of tourism and travel markets include –

- Purpose (of trips – business, vacation, convention, social/family);
- Psychographic (where behavioral aspects of motivation are used); and
- Benefits (where the benefits being sought by the consumer are the key variable).

The tourism marketing mix

The marketing mix refers to the blend of ideas, concepts and features which marketing management put together to best appeal to their target market segments. Each target segment will have a separate marketing mix, tailored to meet the specific needs of consumers in the individual segment.

Product Mix

The tourism product is a non-material intangible thing. The following services are included in the product mix for the tourism industry:

- Attraction
- Accommodation: one star to Five star, Cottages.
- Transportation: Airways, Railways, Roads, Sea-ways
- Recreation: Theatre, Club, Park, Music
- Restaurant: Western, Chinese, Indian, Others.

- Shopping: Artistic, Handicrafts, Handloom, Books, Garments, Jewellery.

Branding plays a very important role in tourism marketing. Car rental firms, hotel chains and airlines, in particular employ tremendous efforts to ensure that their name is widely recognized and synonymous with quality, value or some other characteristic. Travel agents and tour operators depend on reputation to a large extent, and so it is imperative that they have a strong, recognizable identity. The main reason to build brand loyalty is to encourage repeat business.

Price Mix

In the tourism industry, the pricing decisions are found critical and challenging since it is a multi-segment industry. When a tourist proposes to visit a particular place, the total cost on his/her travelling includes the expenses incurred on transportation, accommodation, communication or so.

In the pricing decisions, the product or the service mix of the tourist organizations is found important. This makes it essential that the tourist organizations set prices in line with the quality of services to be made available to the customers.

Pricing policy decisions will be directed by strategic objectives. If the objective is market penetration then prices must be set very competitively to appeal to the largest possible number of potential consumers. If, on the other hand, a firm is pursuing a niche strategy, catering for the luxury market in high value, exclusive tourism services, then prices should reflect this promotion and advertising can be used to differentiate the product on an exclusively basis and premium prices may be charged.

The tourist professionals while making the pricing decisions are required to think in favour of discounting price. The different forms of discount, such as discounting for cash payment, price reduction for quality, trade discounts, trade allowances, seasonal discount, distressed stock and similar discount tactics are the options.

Place Mix

Distribution management is concerned with two things – availability and accessibility. If tourism marketing management is to be certain that their products and services are both available and accessible to the target market, they must design a channel strategy that will be effective.

Some tourist organizations deal directly with the consumers; some other organizations utilize more than one method of distribution. The middlemen are the tour operators and the transport operators who buy services like hotel rooms, seats in the aircrafts, railways, arrange chartered flights and sell the same either to the travel agents or even directly to the tourists. Airlines, for example, sell tickets through travel agents, and sell seats on flights to tour operators, whilst also operating direct marketing by offering travellers the opportunity to make reservations through their own banking offices.

Promotional Mix

The tourist organizations take up the responsibility of informing, sensing and persuading the potential tourists. The marketers need to use the various components of promotion to increase the number of users. The advertisement helps in providing important information to the actual and potential tourists. Its coverage is so wide. It essentially follows the AIDA principle of attracting the attention, arouse interest, create desire, and stimulate actions. Advertising is aimed to create the awareness of the travel offers available on a resort and its attractions to influence their business decisions.

Another dimension of the promotion mix is publicity which focuses attention on strengthening the public relations by developing a rapport with the media people and getting their personalized support in publicizing the business.

Sales promotion through brochures, point of sale displays and even video cassettes plays a very important role as advertising. In a tourism industry a travel company offers to their clients compliments such as flight bags, wallets for tickets and foreign exchange and covers and passport. The hotels offer a number of facilities like shoe shine clothes, first aid sewing kits and shampoo. Further, the clients also get fruits and flowers in their rooms. There is not doubt that almost all the promotional measures generate goodwill and add values to the product.

Personal selling: The travel and hotel business depend considerably on the personal selling. The development of travel and tourism has been possible due to well educated and trained sales personal.

People: The tourism industry depends substantially on the management of human resources. The travel agents and travel guides play an important role and therefore the management of people helps in developing their credentials to deliver goods to the tourist organizations.

Hotel Marketing

Marketing hotel services include in its purview everything and almost all the dimensions directly or indirectly helping in promoting the business. This necessitates formulation of a sound marketing mix, such as an aggregation of different sub-mixes such as product, promotion, pricing, place, people and process.

Market Segmentation for Hotel

The hotel professionals segment the market in such a way to identify the changing needs and requirements of different segments to make the marketing decisions effective.

The main bases for hotel segments are geographic, psychographic and socio-economic. The geographic bases include hotel companies located at different places and psychographic bases include life cycle,

buying motives and knowledge of prospects regarding the services. The social-economic bases include women segment, weak-end segment and instant market segment. To be more specific, the life-style segment is found to be more important.

Marketing Mix for Hotel Industry

The term marketing mix is the combination of what market offers and identifying the actual point where marketing actions can be taken to improve the acceptability of hotel product and stimulate demand. The combination of core and peripheral services, the creative promotional decisions, the pricing strategies helping hotels in maintaining the commercial viability, the efficient hotel personnel are important decision making areas which gravitate attention on the formulation of a sound mix for the hotel industry. It is against this background, the different sub-mixes of the marketing mix are discussed.

Product Mix

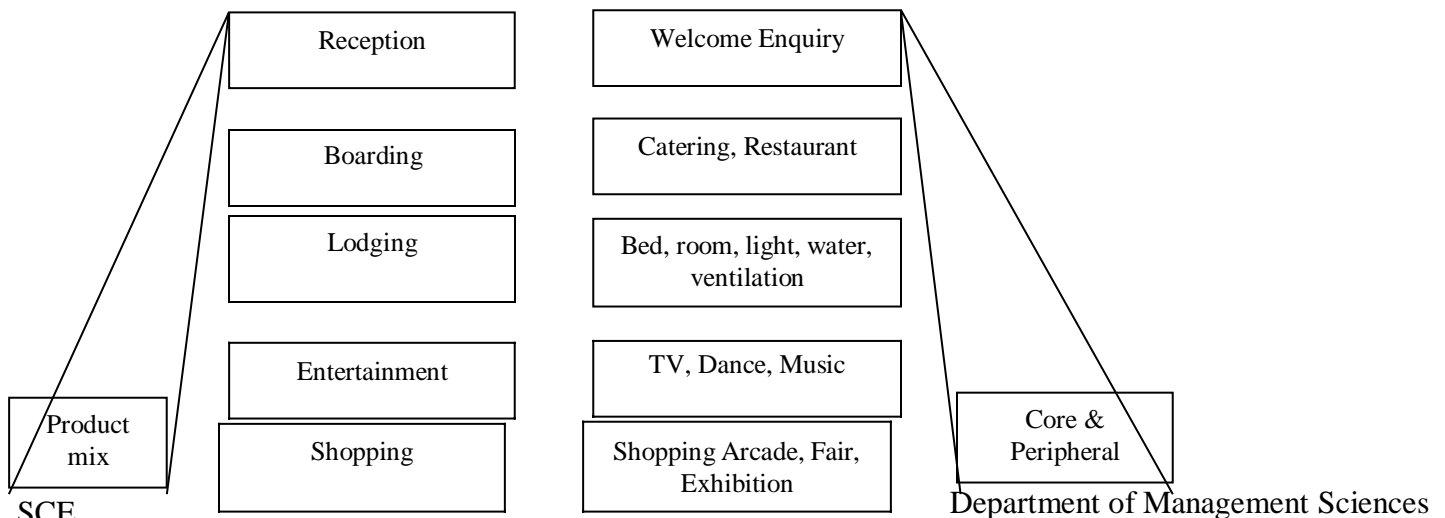
The product mix for the hotel services include catering management, restaurant and cafeteria management, management of bedrooms, management of convention halls etc. The boarding services are considered to be an important part of product mix. In addition, the lodging services also become significant.

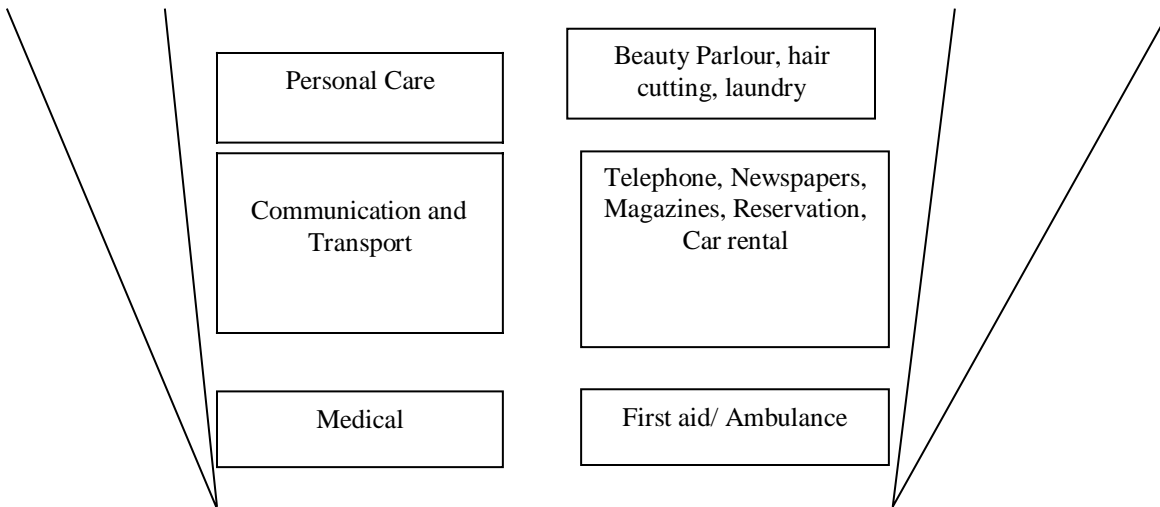
Product Mix of Hotel Services

Here it is essential that facilities like light, water, electricity, ventilation, entertainment, sanitation arrangement of bed etc. are also equally important. While formulating the product mix, the hotel organisations are required to make possible a fair mix of all the above services.

Promotion Mix

It is not only sufficient to provide quality services, but it is equally important to promote the business in such a way that the prospects come to know about the quality to be offered to them. There are number of components for promoting the business such as, advertisement, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling and word of mouth.





Advertising

The hotel professionals make productive use of print media, broadcast media and telecast media for advertisement. There are significant developments in the print media and due to sophistication in the printing technologies, it is possible to attract the attention of prospectus by displaying attractive scenes, events, comforts etc. While selecting the media, it should be kept in mind the magazines and newspapers preferred by target audience. The professionals have to select a suitable time for transmission in broadcast media, when a majority of the target audience are supposed to be close to the radio set. Similarly, in telecast media, while advertising due weightage to be given in selecting sensitive hours, when a majority of viewers are found before their T.V. sets. The scenes of hotel location, the swimming pool, the shopping complex, the personal car centres, the arranged bed rooms, the restaurants and convention hall, the aesthetic management are required to be telecast in such a way that attracts the target users.

Publicity

In the hotel industry, public relations activities play an important role in informing the clients regarding the merits of different services offered. The specialties of hotel are presented in such a way that the prospects are motivated to avail of the facilities offered by a particular hotel.

In the hotel business, there are number of events which should be transmitted to the local press, such as menus for certain functions held at hotel, particulars or certain important conferences or exhibitions to be held, menus for special days of the year, photographs of staff dressed up for special days and well-known people staying in the hotel. Sponsored fashion-designing events, entertainment programmes, beauty contest etc. can also be effective publicity tools.

Sales Promotion

Like other organizations, the hotels also offer incentives to the users vis-à-vis to the personnel and organizations evencing interest in promoting the business.

Tools of sales promotion

- Directed at Hotel Staff: Travel, concessional accommodation for close relations, use of wedding halls for staff, contests, gift.
- Directed at Tour Operators and Travel Agents: Compliments (Pen, ashtrays, diaries, calendars, brochure, trade exhibition, lunch, direct mail – letters, circulars) concessional accommodation, contest.
- Directed at Guests: Off-reason discount, point of sale, sales, literature, compliments (Pen, ashtrays, diaries, calendars, gifts, contest, joint promotion with travel companies, direct mail).

Word of mouth

The word of mouth promotion is very much instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. In the hotel industry it is much more significant. The word of mouth promoters are those who are satisfied with the service of hotels, who inturn motivate the prospects. The hotel professionals bear the responsibility of identifying opinion leaders who can successfully act as a publicist. Persons with high communicative ability, having a reputation in the society are found suitable for publicizing the services of hotels.

Personal selling

The hotel business is substantially influenced by personal selling. The sales personnel are required to be friendly in dealings and expression. They are required to be helpful and patient and work towards generating more satisfaction to customers. For selling successfully, it is essential that sales forces are professionally sound. A fair combination of personal and social skill is found essential for the sales force to be engaged.

Price mix

Pricing decisions are found critical and challenging. The hotel professionals need to be intelligent while fixing the hotel traffics since the service are of perishable in nature. In addition, the seasonal fluctuation in demand and increasing intensity of competition also complicate the task. So they need intelligence while making strategical and tactical pricing decisions.

Tactical pricing is found instrumental in promoting the hotel business. There are number of ways for practicing this tool:

- Seasonal Discounts: To charge lower prices, especially during off-season.
- Trade Discounts: This is offered to tour operators and travel agents
- Special Discounts: Special function room rates for overnight conventions.

Place Mix

In the hotel industry the distribution of services is mainly related to the transmission of information by the related persons to the ultimate users. As and when the bookings are made of a bed-room or a function room or of a restaurant, the confirmation is found essential. A number of factors are found influencing the distribution process, such as location, point of sale, the cost of distribution, effectiveness of marketing resources, image of hotels, tactical strategy and the motivational schemes.

The choice of location is the most important business decision, specially for proprietor owned restaurants, guest houses and small tourist attractions. With the introduction of computers and increasing user of information technologies, a radical change has come in the distribution system.

The middleman are wholesalers buying hotel rooms in bulk and then selling the same to the retailers, known as the travel agents. The tour operators are called the producers of services. The travel agents buy the services at the request of their clients and provide a convenient network of sales outlets which caters to the needs of the catchment area.

The strategic choice between internal and external selling, domestic and international selling, direct and indirect selling occupy a place of significance. The hotel professionals are supposed to make the decision sound, so that the process of distribution is made cost effective.

People

The people working in the organisation are quite important for the success of the business. In hotel industry, the receptionists, the porters, the house-keepers, the waiters and waitresses play an incremental role in promoting the business. The marketing managers take up the responsibility of managing the frontline personnel in such a way that the promised services reach to the ultimate users. If the hotel personnel prove to be high performers, personally committed, professionally sound, value oriented, aware of the behavioral management, familiar with the aesthetic management, they can satisfy the users.

Consultancy Marketing

The Institute of Management Consultancy UK consider consultancy services as the services provided by an independent and qualified person or persons in identifying the investigating the problems concerned with policy, organisatoin, procedures and methods; recommending appropriate action and helping to implement these recommendations.

The aforesaid views make it clear that in the consultancy services, an expert of the related field or discipline or group of experts identify and investigate the problems and on the basis of their expertise, make available suitable suggestions and also help in the implementation of recommendations. As for

example, person or persons having and outstanding excellence in the concerned areas like legal, medical, management, technical or so make available specialized services to a person or persons in the shape of knowledge and information. They make an indepth study of the problems and offer to them appropriate suggestions to combat the problem. For the services rendered, they may or may not charge fee or commission.

The application of marketing concept in the consultancy services is a recent phenomenon. A number of consultants have been found engaged in the process and they have been found selling their views or expertise. This made ways for conceptualizing marketing in the consultancy services. The growing significance of innovative ideas, expertise mainly to excel competition paved avenues for practicing marketing. An individual or an institution started the process of marketing the consultancy services on national and international levels for making profits which made the business conditions competitive. Since then, the marketing concept has gained importance. Thus by consultancy marketing. The emphasis is on marketing of expertise by an individual or an institution where they formulate the marketing mix and keep on moving the process of innovating the decisions to establish their edge on the competitors.

Market segmentation

Clients possess some uniqueness which complicates the task of a marketer, while assessing their needs and identifying the level of their expectations. In the consultancy services, there are a number of factors influencing the needs and requirements of the prospects. In the consultancy services and organisation needs to segment the market on the basis of region, sector and geographical conditions.

Market segmented on the basis of zones helps the consultancy organisations in studying the needs and requirements of different zones and the development of marketing resources are thus made optimal to the users representing a particular zone. Segmentation on the basis of sector helps the consultants and the consultancy organisations in understanding the expectations of different categories of users in a different way.

Marketing mix for the consultancy organisations

The formulation of marketing mix is an important decision making area which requires professional excellence. An individual or a group of individuals engaged in the consultancy services is required to formulate a sound marketing mix that makes possible an optimal development of marketing resources. It is the quality and quantity of different submixes that play a significant role in determining the quality of marketing decisions. This makes it essential that the marketers while formulating product mix, place mix, promotion mix, price mix and people keep in their mind the intensity of competition in addition to the level of expectations of clients.

Product mix

In the consultancy services, the important products are technical services, legal services, medical services and the managerial services. The providers and the clients may be an individual or even an institution.

The formulation of product mix requires a number of care and precautions. The innovative ideas, sophisticated technologies, intensive research need due care while formulating the product mix.

The formulation of a sound product mix makes it essential that the consultancy organizations make efforts to design a sound product portfolio in which different types of services are included. The medical consultants need to be aware of the latest devices of treatment and to offer the patients the best medical aids. The technical consultants also need to innovate their product mix in the face of technological sophistication from the product mix. The legal consultants need to be aware of the latest developments, such as amendments in laws, rules and regulations and to formulate the service mix accordingly. Thus the elimination and inclusion processes need to be adopted even in consultancy services. These facts make it clear that like other organizations, the consultancy organizations also need to make possible innovating in the face of multi-dimensional developments in the business.

The formulation of sound package is also found important in the product mix of the consultancy organisations. Here the emphasis is on the blending of different types of services keeping in view the needs and requirements of different segments availing the services. The packages become a point of attraction if the marketers show their professional excellence in the blending process.

In view of the above, it is right to mention that the formulation of a sound product mix is considered essential and the marketing professional serving the consultancy organisations need to make it possible. This is easier when they are well aware of the changing needs and requirements and the increasing level of expectations of the clients / customers.

Promotion mix

Like other services, the consultancy services are also required to be promoted. With the help of sound mix of promotion which is a fair blending of the different constituents, such as advertising, publicity, sales promotion, word-of-mouth promotion and personal selling, the consultancy services can be effectively promoted.

Advertising

While advertising, the consultancy organisations need to draw their attention to some of the important problems mentioned below:

- Composing slogans having creativity.

- Selecting suitable vehicles for traveling the messages
- Injecting sensitivity to the messages, themes and appeals.
- Making the advertisements measures cost effective.
- Increasing the life-span of advertisement slogans
- Testing the advertising slogans before their final launching
- Testing the advertising effectiveness.

With the increasing sophistication in print technology, the print media is an effective instrument in informing, sensing and persuading the clients. The newspapers, magazines, posters, brochures, leaflets are effective print media.

Now, the telecast media has established its edge over the print and broadcast media. This is due to the fact that televisions have the outstanding merit of audio-visual exposure. The marketing and advertising professionals bear the responsibility of making the advertisement slogans creative provide adequate budget to make advertisement effective and purposeful.

Publicity

Like other organisations even the consultancy organisation are required to use this component of promotion. The ultimate object of publicity is to transmit the news and information to the masses. In the consultancy services, the publicity measures are required to be innovative. This requires support of academics and professionals in the field of creative literature and getting them published in the important newspapers, magazines and journals preferred by the target clients. The services to be offered by a consultancy organisation would be published in a reputed media having wider circulation. The technical, medical, legal's management journal, and the important newspapers and magazines preferred by the prospects require due attention of marketing professionals.

The marketing professionals serving the consultancy organisation need to develop rapport with the media people to publish the developments. Organizing press conferences, displaying and visualizing positive contributions, quality of services, benefits to the users are some of the important aspects requiring due attention of marketing professionals in general and the public relations officers in particular.

Sales promotion

This component of promotion bears the efficacy of touching the target with the help of incentives offered to the middlemen and the clients. It is a temporary incentive instrumental in promoting the consultancy business.

The consultancy organizations are required to influence the personnel supposed to offer the services to the clients by small gifts. In addition, the sales promotion measures are also offered for the users or clients. This may be in different forms, such as concessional services for a particular period, offering of small gifts to the customers, organisation of sales contests for the clients and users, package benefits to the customers for a particular period. While offering incentives, the consultancy organizations also need to turn their eyes on the strategies adopted by the competitors so that they are in a position to offer the innovative measures.

Personal selling

Sales people are supposed to perceive power, value and decision making system in the client's organisations. It is also essential that they develop personal relationship with clients. The success of personal selling substantially depends on the personality and excellence of an individual. Physical attractions are assigned due weightage in the very context. If they behave well, act well, move well, communicate well and receive well; the task of consultancy organizations becomes simple.

Personal promotion helps the consultancy organizations in creating impulse buying. A consultant salesman is required to devise new ways to move market into action so that impulse buying is generated in a right direction. The excellence of a consultative salesman occupies a place of outstanding significance. If the clients remain satisfied with the communicative ability of the consulting sales people, the task of consultants and the consultancy organizations is simplified considerably. It is pertinent to mention that it is not only the consultants who generate the business but virtually it is the result of a joint endeavour of the consultative sales people and the consultants that simplify the process of promoting the business. The consultative sales people are required to create awareness and interest, reinforce to overcome cognitive dissonance, facilitate and cause the purchase to take place and ensure that the clients are satisfied with the service of consultants. It is against this background that personal selling occupies a place of outstanding significance in the promotion of consultancy services.

Word-of-mouth promotion

By word-of-mouth communication the emphasis is on promoting the services by the hidden sales force. It is pertinent to mention that the satisfied group of customers communicate to their close friends and relatives the outstanding properties of the services availed by them. For instance, if you are satisfied with the services of a medical consultant you talk to your friends and relatives regarding the same. In fact, you act as a hidden sales force. In future your friends and relatives prefer to use the services of the same doctor. Like this, if a legal consultant helps you in protecting the property, you talk to your friends and relatives the same. They prefer to use the services of the same legal consultants as and when they need.

These facts are a mute testimony to this proposition that quality goods or services are promoted even by the satisfied group of customers or users. It is in the context the we talk about the instrumentality of word-of-mouth promotion in promoting the consultancy services.

It is important that in this context the marketing professionals also need to sue the services of opinion leaders or vocal persons. They identify such persons, offer to them concessional services in addition to small gifts and expect from them a strong advocacy in favour of their services.

Price mix

In the consultancy services the price mix refers to fee or commission charged by the consultants or the consultancy organisations for making the services available to the clients. The pricing objectives may be either price-competitor or non-price-competitor. In the price-competitor objective, the consultancy organizations offer lower price since the pricing decisions are required to be motivational. In the non-price-competitor objective, stable pricing is followed. The other objectives are profit-generating, market stability, market share etc.

It is important that the consultants and the consultancy organizations explore possibilities for a rational pricing policy which helps in maintaining the commercial viability besides serving the social interests.

Place Mix

An individual consultant offers the services directly to the ultimate users. But the consultancy organisations offer the services to the clients with the help of branch offices. To be more specific when the head office located for off, it is essential that the consultancy organizations make suitable arrangements for the offering of service at different places through its branches. The opening of branch offices simplify the task of head office which also helps in improving the quality of services.

People Mix

In almost all the consultancy organizations, the instrumentality of people in implementing the policies and programmes in an effective way. The consultancy organizations also need the services of quality people serving as consultants, consultant sales people, working in the branch offices. A fair synchronization of sophisticated technologies and quality employees makes the ways for quality upgradation. If the employees serving the branch offices are satisfied with the incentives offered to them, the promised services reach to the clients or the ultimate users. This makes it essential that the consultancy organisations make possible employee-orientation by offering to the employees incentives in different forms. Thus while managing people, the marketing professionals need due weightage to the incentive plans for employees which would pave avenues for performance – orientation.

Courier Services

With the increasing pressure of work and decreasing efficiency, the Department of Posts failed in managing the mailing services which made it essential that an alternative system emerges to cater to the changing needs of trade as well as the domestic sectors. The courier services thus came into existence. A number of formal and informal organisations started offering the services at regional, national and international levels. The different categories of users have no option but to depend on the private sector who, of course offer quality but of expensive nature. It is against this background that we talk about the marketing of courier services.

Courier Marketing – A Conceptual Framework

Marketing the courier services focuses our attention on the application of modern marketing principles in the business process. Courier marketing is a managerial process that make possible a planed development of services. It is an organized efforts to make the services commercially viable to the courier organizations vis-à-vis affordable to the users who make use of their multi-dimensional services. The marketing concept makes it essential that the organizations formulate a sound service mix in which we find a fair synchronization of different types of services. The courier marketing practices thus make possible formulation of different submixes of the marketing mix, such as the product mix, the promotion mix, the price mix, the place mix and the people mix. In addition, the development of sound marketing inputs becomes a focal point which makes the ways for the development of quality outputs.

Conceptualizing courier marketing makes the ways for satisfying the users which happens to be the most important thing for increasing the market share and the level of profits. The courier organizations thus can maintain commercial viability. By formulating and innovating the marketing mix, the courier organisations can be successful in developing and perceiving a new perception of quality which makes possible qualitative improvements in the process. Generation of profits and satisfaction to the users are the two important dimensions which pave avenues for multi-dimensional quantitative-cum-qualitative improvements in the process. The organizations by making the services competitive can be successful in excelling competition. Since the marketing focuses on professional excellence, the courier organizations can also be successful in projecting a fair image. These facts make it clear that the application of marketing principles is to benefit the courier organizations in many ways. It is against this background that the leading courier organisations are found practicing innovative marketing.

Marketing Mix for Courier Organizations

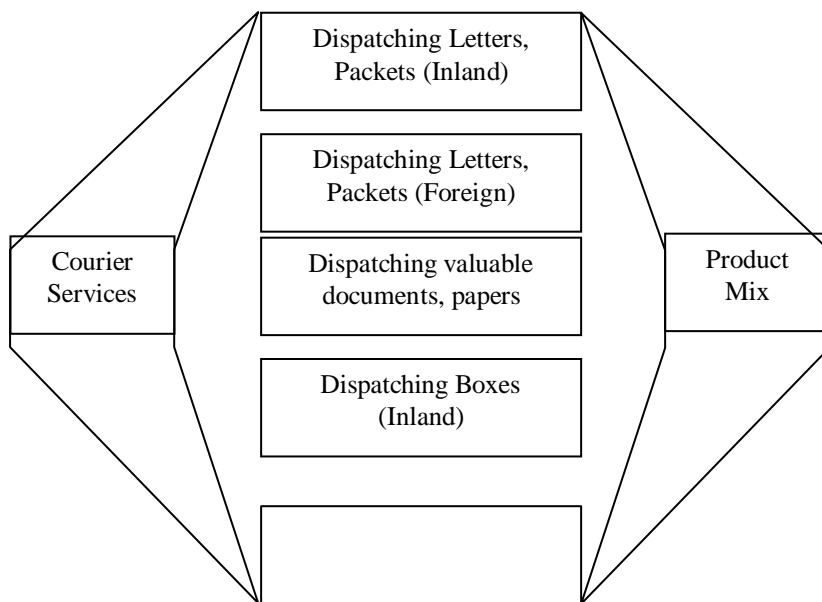
The courier organizations are required to formulate a sound marketing mix for improving the quality of services. The courier services are required to be made competitive and this makes it essential that the courier organizations conceptualize marketing in such a way that the processes of qualitative-cum-

quantitative transformation are activated in the face of emerging business conditions. It is against this background that the marketing professionals are supposed to make creative marketing decisions. This focuses our attention on the formulation of different submixes.

Product Mix

Mounting intensity of competition makes it essential that the courier organizations formulate a sound product mix. By formulating a sound product mix, they would be in a position to understand the changing needs and requirements of different segments of users on prospects and the service profile would be made user-friendly.

Inclusion of innovative services in the service mix would enrich the service profile and would also be instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. The stimulation of demand makes it essential that the customer get the services which are not to be made available by the Department of Posts. This draws our attention on the formulation of a sound product mix for the courier organizations. The professionals are supposed to work with the service motive. They need to make it sure that the promised services reach to the users without making any distortion in the process.



Promotion Mix

Advertising

Fig. 13.1

The first constituent of promotion, i.e. advertising plays an effective role in promoting the business. To be more specific in the present age of sophisticated technologies, we find advertisement instrumental in promoting the business of courier organizations. In this context, they need to advertise through print

availability of quality materials is found injecting additional attractions while advertising through the print media. The advertising professionals need to select the media preferred by the target prospects. The newspapers, magazines in big circulation may be effective since the services are used by almost all the segments of the market. In addition, the courier organizations also get an opportunity of making descriptive advertisements to courier organizations also get an opportunity of making descriptive advertisements to inform in detail the target prospects. Further we have been found more effective. The marketing professionals and to be more specific the advertising professionals bear the responsibility of composing creative slogans so that messages, themes and appeals are found instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. There is no doubt that due to audio-visual exposure we find telecast media very much effective in stimulating the demand. The large-sized courier organizations are found using all the three media.

Publicity

Being an unpaid form of persuasive communication, the publicity makes it essential that the professional attempt to develop a rapport with the media people and organize a get-together and offer to them lunch, dinner and the small gifts to influence them to write articles and news items in favour. If the media people are found satisfied with the quality of services offered by them, they may give suitable coverage as a news item which would considerably be instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. The publicity measures are found more effective since the prospects at large feel that the media people are presenting right things regarding the services of courier organisations. Thus the courier organisations may also use this component of the promotion mix.

Personal selling

It is right to mention that for promoting the business of courier organisation, we find personal selling very much effective. The courier organisations may be successful in promoting the business in a right fashion, if the sales people have high communication ability. To be more specific the large sized courier organizations may engage agents, trade representatives for developing contract with the target prospects. If the sales personnel have high communicative ability, attractive personality and commitment to profession, the dialogues can be transformed into a deal. We can't deny the fact that the courier organisations need to recruit and train quality sales people for that very purpose. The instrumentalities of messengers acting as courier have been accepted by all. If the courier, agents, representative narrate to the prospects right things in a right fashion, we find enough scope for stimulation.

Word-of-mouth promotion

If the courier organizations offer world class services to the prospects or users; it is natural that they remain satisfied and communicate to their friends and relatives the plus and negative points. They in a true sense act as a hidden salesforce. If we come to know about the outstanding quality of courier services from our friends and relatives, we prefer to use the services of that very organisation as and when the circumstances necessitate so. The courier organizations may also take the support of opinion leaders for this purposes.

Sales promotion

Sales promotion happens to be an important component of the promotion mix. The courier organisation need to think about the innovative promotional tools for the sales personnel, marketing personnel and more so for the users of the services. in these context, they need to offer gifts, offer an attractive package, concessional services to the habitual users or so. The main thing in the process is to make the tools innovative because almost all the courier organizations are found offering small or big gifts.

Price Mix

The pricing decisions of courier services become critical because the organizations are supposed to make rational decision which on the one hand maintain their commercial viability while on the other also subserve the interests of those segments of the society who find it difficult to pay the high tariff. Like other organizations, the courier organisations are also required to keep into consideration the fact that even the weaker sections of the society find it convenient to user their services. It is against this background that we go through the price mix of the courier organizations.

The courier organizations buy the supporting services from the different categories of organisations which substantially influence their tariff structure. It is right to mention that whatever they charge as tariff from the users remains the only source of financing the business and therefore it is difficult for them to subserve the social interests by offering concessional or subsidized services. However the courier organization need to explore avenues for the same.

The courier organizations are required to make the pricing decisions more scientific and progressive. This draws our attention on charging high structure from the users dispatching valuable documents and papers, charging low structure from the habitual users, charging very low structure from the habitual large-sized users. The motive is to increase the market share and therefore in no case the tariff structure should cross the structure charged by the Department of Posts. If they improve the quality of services and make the structure competitive, the market share would automatically be increased.

Place Mix

The place mix draws attention on the two important issues, first the services are processed in a right way in order that the gap between the services-promised and service-offered is bridged over and second the courier organization and their branch officers are located at a sensitive point so that the users as well as the personnel working there don't feel any trouble.

The first dimension of the place makes it essential that the professionals manage their head and branch offices properly. The personnel working there are efficient and the technologies used in the process of offering the services are sophisticated.

The second dimension of the place mix drawn attention on the location points for the branch and head offices. We can't deny that the places selected for the offices of the courier organizations should smoothly be accessible. The required infrastructural facilities should be available at the centers and the offices should be managed in a right way. The interior decoration needs due attention of the professionals because this is the provision found instrumental in adding attractions to the services. In this context, it is also significant that proper furnishing is made possible and sophisticated communication services are available at the centers. To be more specific, we find safety and protection provisions requiring due attention of the professionals responsible for managing the branch offices as well as the head office. The availability of power and transportation facilities can't be under estimated.

The management of place for the courier organizations need due attention of the policy planners failing which the new perception of quality can't be developed. Thus it is right to mention that the courier organizations need to manage place mix with the help of efficient personnel and with the support of sophisticated technologies.

People Mix

In addition to other components of the marketing mix, we also need to gravitate our attention one the people mix. It is against this background that the professionals make a strong advocacy in favour of managing the people mix. This draws attention on the different categories of employees serving the courier organizations at head or branch offices.

By performance-orientation, our emphasis is on improving the efficiency of employees involved in the process. This makes it essential that the marketing professionals assign due weightage to the management of employees serving the courier organizations. The employees working at the head and branch offices are required to be efficient, well aware of the operation and maintenance of technologies used in the process, sincere and punctual to the management of time and familiar with the behavioral profile of prospects or users. By showing commitment to the profession, they can prove themselves to be high performs.

We talk about performance-orientation but don't find it essential to assign due weightage to employee-orientation. By the employee-orientation, our focus is on motivating the employees suitably by offering to them efficiency-based incentive plans. The professionals need to realize that unless they offer to the employees suitable incentives, the process of efficiency-generation would hardly be accelerated. This makes it essential that the courier organizations assign an overriding priority to the incentive plans for the employees which would make ways for performance – orientation.

In view of the above, it is right to mention that the professionals bearing the responsibility of formulating a sound marketing mix also consider the instrumentality of people mix and they need to blend the different submixes in such a way that the marketing decisions are found proactive.

Bank Marketing

The new concept of bank marketing assigned due weightage to customer satisfaction. It is aimed at having a full view of customers needs fulfilling them in the best possible way by required services, identification of potential customers and conducting the activities on the basis of market segmentation. It is said that marketing of banking service is concerned with product, promotion, pricing and place. In addition, an number of experts also advocate in favour of people, process and physical evidence.

Market Segmentation

The bank professionals have to segments the market in such a way that the expectations of all the potential customers are studied in the right perspective and the marketing resources are developed to fulfil the same.

The policy of segmentation helps the professionals in formulating and innovating the policies and at the same time simplifies their task, while formulating and innovating the strategic decisions.

An important criteria for market segmentation is the economic system is which agricultural sector, industrial sector, services sector, household sector, institutional sector and rural sector require due weightage.

Marketing Mix for the Banking Services

The formulation of the marketing mix for the banking services is the prime responsible-to the product portfolio, which means, the different types of services/ schemes formulated by the banks.

Product Portfolio for Banks

a. Deposits

- i. Time deposit
- ii. Demand deposit

b. International Banking

- i. Letters of credit
- ii. Foreign currency
- c. Consultancy
- i. Tax
- ii. Merchant banking
- iii. Project counselling
- iv. Investment counselling
- d. Loans and Advances
 - i. Agricultural loan
 - ii. Vehicle loan
 - iii. Educational loan
 - iv. Jewel loan
 - v. Business loan
- e. Miscellaneous
 - i. Safe-custody
 - ii. Credit cards
 - iii. Travellers' Cheque
 - iv. Collections
 - v. Gift Cheque

Promotion Mix

In the formulating of marketing mix, the bank professionals see also supposed to blend the promotion mix in which different components of promotion, such as advertising, publicity, sales promotion, word of mouth promotion, personal selling and telemarketing are given due weightage.

Advertisement

While developing advertising he bank has to prepare appeals, slogans and messages and select a suitable media for travelling the messages. There are a number of devices to advertise, such a broadcast media, telecast media and the print media. For promoting the banking business, the print media is found economic as well as effective. The telecast media very much effective, but it is found very expensive. The messages, appeals can be presented in a very effective way.

They have to provide sufficient budget and test the effectiveness of advertisements. Banks need to develop and strengthen the public relation activities to promote their business.

Personal selling

The personal selling is found instrumental in promoting the banking business. It is just another name for persuasion. The banking organizations need to make use of this dimension with the help and cooperation of efficient and personally committed sales people. If the sales people have in-depth knowledge of the sales, dialogue, sales technique behavioral profile of the customers, the task of transforming the dialogue into a business is found easier. This requires an intensive training programme. The personal selling is based on the personal skill of sales people. If they know in detail about the prospects to be interviewed, the questions to be asked by the prospects/ representative of business houses, it is possible for them to convince.

Sales Promotion

The banking organizations also think in favour of promotional incentives both to the bankers as well as the customers. The gift, contests, fairs and shows, discount and commission, entertainment and travelling plans for bankers, additional allowances, low interest financing and retaliatory are to mention a few found instrumental in promoting the banking business.

Word of mouth

The social reformists, popular cine artists, TV artists, opinion leaders, vocal persons may act as word of mouth promoters. A satisfied group of customers is considered to be the most successful hidden promoters. They will commend to others the excellent services of a particular bank or the outstanding properties of a particular scheme. Hence it is clear that the word of mouth promotion is an important component of promotion mix, but its instrumentality is influenced by the quality of service offered.

Price Mix

The pricing decisions related to interest and fee or commission charged by banks are found instrumental in motivating the target market. The pricing policy is considered important for raising the number of customers vis-à-vis the accretion of deposits. Of course, there are a number of factors of influence the process, but the key role is placed by the Reserve Bank of India.

Place Mix

A selection of suitable place for the establishment of a branch is significant with the view point of making the place accessible and in addition, the safety and securing provision are also important. The management of office is also found significant with the view point of making the services attractive. The furnishing, civic amenities and parking facilities cannot be overlooked. Of late, aesthetic management getting due place in the foreign branches. This draws our attention on beautifying the office and premises and making the place environment friendly. Thus these consideration need due weightage while managing the branches of a bank.

People

Generation of efficiency is substantially influenced by the quality of human resources. The commercial banks need to assign a priority to the development of quality people for the development of an organisation. Hence the first task before the banks is to overhaul the recruitment process. While fixing criteria for selection, they need assign due weightage to the ethical values. Further, the education and training facilities are required to be innovated. Above all due weightage to be given for the development of Human, Humane, Humanism, these three terms if found in the human resources, help developing productive people.

It is high time that the commercial banks conceptualize innovative marketing to satisfy the customers' expectations and to meet the global competition.

Insurance Marketing

The term insurance marketing refers to the marketing of insurance service with the motto of customer-orientation and profit-generation. The insurance marketing focuses on the formulation of an ideal mix for the insurance business so that the insurance organizations survive and thrive in a right perspective. They quality of services can be improved by formulating a fair mix of the core and peripheral services.

The marketing concept in the insurance business is concerned with the expansion of insurance business in the best interest of society vis-à-vis the insurance organisations. The insurance companies lag behind most manufacturers in recognizing the marketing concept in their organizations. Insurance companies tend towards a strong sales orientation, since the services they sell, although certainly necessary ones, rarely sell themselves. Potential policy holders are reluctant to think about the disaster and death. So they postpone planning for these possibilities unless they are contacted and influenced by insurance agents. Thus the insurance company's mutual orientation is toward sales, not marketing. But in the modern business world, the marketing concept insists on fixing of accountability for overall marketing performance.

The selection of risks (product planning), policy writing (customer service), rating of actuarial (pricing) and agency management (distribution) – all marketing activities make up an integrated marketing strategy. Particularly in the developing countries like ours, the organizational objectives advocate spreading of insurance services much more widely and in particular to the rural areas and specially to the economically backward classes with a view to reaching all insurable persons. This naturally necessitates an integral marketing strategy. In other words, market-orientation in place of sales orientation is need of the hour. Hence the marketing concept in the insurance business focuses on the

formulation of marketing mix or a control over the whole group of marketing activities that make up an integrated marketing strategy.

Market Segmentation

In the insurance organizations, the task of formulating the overall marketing strategies cannot be performed efficiently unless the market is segmented. It was against this background that marketing studies engineered a sound foundation for segmenting the markets of insurance business. The market for the insurance business is found vast, the potential policyholders are in very good number and their needs and requirements are not identical. The segmentation helps the insurance organisations in dividing and sub-dividing the market into small segments in which the needs and requirements are found by the large identical.

If the market segmentation is done in a right fashion, the marketers find it convenient to identify the level of expectation of users. The main purpose of market segmentation is to know the market. Unless the insurance companies know the needs and requirements and identify the level of expectations of the policy holders, it is difficult to formulate a sound marketing strategy.

Where a large number of users living in the rural areas, the emergence of a strong rural sector cannot be negated. The region-wise segmentation simplifies the task of having a microscopic study of culture, language, likes and dislikes. This helps in making the marketing decisions creative. It is essential that the insurance organisations capitalize on the available opportunities in the market. They need to increase their market share. This makes it essential that they succeed in informing, sensing and persuading the different segments where the potential users are available. It is not productive to concentrate on only one segment. The insurance professionals need to business in all the segments, such as rural and urban, men and women, agricultural and industrial or so. The need of the hour is to spread the insurance business even to the agricultural sector of the economy.

The segmentation would help insurance professionals in making the promotional measures creative which would be very much instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. The advertisement professionals would make advertisement appeals, messages, campaigns proactive to the receiving capacity of the target audience. The sales promotion measures can also be innovated to get a positive response. The personal selling may be effective since the sales personnel/ agents are supposed to be aware of the needs and requirements of customers/ users. Thus the segmentation would help marketers in many ways. The pricing/ fee decision can also be rationalized and the weaker sections of the society would get substantial benefits. The main thing in segmentation is receiving the expectations of users/ prospects in a right fashion and accordingly developing a suitable marketing strategy.

Marketing Mix for Insurance

The insurance organizations in general and the public sector insurance organisations in particular need to assign due weightage to the formulation of marketing mix for the insurance business. The emerging trends indicate that if the insurance organizations delay the process of formulating a sound marketing mix for their business, there would be a sharp fall in their market share in the future, which would bring down the rate of profitability. It is against this background that we go through the problem of marketing mix for the insurance services. This makes it essential to study the different submixes of marketing such as the product mix, the promotion mix, the price mix, the place mix, the people, the process and the physical evidence, in relation to the marketing of insurance.

Insurance Product

The insurance organizations produce or generate services in different forms. A product is both what a seller has to sell and what a buyer has to buy. Thus any enterprise that has something to sell, tangible goods or not is selling products. In the insurance business, the insurance organisations are found selling services and therefore, services are their product. Thus a product is also called a bundle of utilities consisting of various product features and accompanying services. When an individual or a company buys a policy from the insurance organizations, not only the policies are bought but the agents's assistance and advice, the prestige of the insurance organizations, the facilities of claims and compensations are also bought.

In the context of formulating the product mix, it is essential that the insurance organisations promote innovation and in the product portfolio include even those services and schemes which are likely to get a positive response in the future. In addition, they need to formulate a sound package that proves to be more motivational. While formulating a package, the insurance professionals need to assign due weightage to the interests of rural India. The private sector insurance organisations have been found making their service mix internationally competitive. This makes a strong advocacy in favour of innovative product strategy for the public sector insurance organizations.

In view of the above, the following aspects need due attention of policy makers:

1. The formulation of product mix should be in the face of innovative product strategy. The strategies adopted by the foreign and private insurance companies should be taken into consideration while initiating the innovation process.

2. The Data Processing Department is supposed to collect necessary information related to the changing level of expectations of prospects so that the senior executives make the product portfolio productive to the users and profitable to the insurance organizations.
3. It is also significant that the insurance organizations initiate the process of elimination of the services, schemes not profitable to them. This necessitates a study of the product life cycle.
4. The formulation of product strategy should assign due weightage to the rural segment emerging as a big profitable segment.
5. The insurance organisations include in the product portfolio even those policies and schemes which become instrumental in safeguarding the interests of the weaker sections of the society.
6. The formulation of a package is also found important. We find the foreign insurance companies designing a package on the basis of the needs and requirements of the concerned segment. This would make the product mix competitive.
7. There are some of the profitable areas which till now are found either partially tapped or even totally untapped. The agents, rural career agents, the branch managers bear the responsibility of identifying the profitable segments of future and helping the senior executive in tapping the potential optimally.
8. A sound product portfolio is the need of the hour and therefore the regulatory barriers or constraints in activating the innovation process should be minimized.

Promotion Mix

In the formulation of marketing mix, the promotion mix occupies a significant place. In the promotion mix, a number of submixes, such as the advertising, public relations, sales promotion, word-of-mouth promotion, personal selling are included.

Advertising

Advertising a paid form of persuasive communications is found important to promote the insurance business. The advertising professionals bear the responsibility of making the advertisement slogans, appeals, campaigns creative so that the process of sensitizing the prospects is found proactive. The insurance companies advertise through telecast media, broadcast media and the print media. Among these, telecast media is found to be more effective in sensitizing process. With the help of audio-visual exposure, the rate of acceptability of the messages can be increased sizeably. If the advertising professionals are well aware of the messages creative. The broadcast media can also be used for that very purpose. Through the available big transmission network and a well developed system, the

insurance organisations are supposed to use even the broadcast media. Another benefit of this media is to reach the messages even to the remotest parts of the country. The print media can also be used for promoting the insurance business. Being economic in nature and impressive in expression, the print media of late, has been found gaining popularity. The sophistication in the print technologies has made the media more attractive. It is against this background that now almost all the organizations assign due weightage to this. The insurance organizations need to promote the print media since this would simplify their task of making the appeals effective by using regional languages.

Publicity

In addition to advertisement, the insurance/ professionals also need to think in favour of publicity since this component of promotion if used in a right fashion makes our promotional efforts proactive. The advertisements may be insensitive, but we find publicity effective since the messages, views, opinions, facts, figures are publicized by media or the vocal leaders. It is a device to promote business without making any payment and therefore it is called as an unpaid form of persuasive communication bearing high rate of sensitivity. Strengthening the public relations activities is another dimension requiring due attention and the public relations officers shall bear the responsibility of projecting a positive image of the organisation. The PRO is considered to be professional having the world class excellence in influencing the prospects, users, others. He/She bears an important responsibility of informing, sensing and persuading. He/she is found responsible for managing the sales dialogues. This makes it essential that we find selection of suitable persons for the said purpose and in addition also intensify training programmes, refresher courses, capsule courses to educate and train them in tune with the changing business conditions. The receptionists, secretaries, front-line-staff publicize the business with their gesture and posture. They are supposed to know-how to talk, how to initiate, how to impress and how to conclude. They should look smart and attractive and should also have quality communicative ability. It is an art which is found based on certain properties. It is essential to educate and train them properly so that they, with the help of their dialogues and body communications succeed in impressing upon the prospects/ users. If they are well aware of the changing level of expectations of customers, the task is made easier.

Sales promotion

Sales promotion is a temporary device which is adopted only for a particular period. In the insurance business, the incentives to the policy holders users or to the agents, rural career agents or even to the insurance personnel for promoting the business are the sales promotion tools. Incentives to the end users for taking a policy play an incremental role in promoting the insurance business. The offering of small

gifts during a particular period, the rebate, discount, bonus can be instrumental in increasing the business of insurance organizations. It is right to mention that such incentive to the policy holders/ prospects would be successful in increasing the business. It is the responsibility of the insurance professionals that they keep on activating the process of innovation so that the foreign insurance companies find it difficult to compete with the public sector insurance organizations.

This makes it clear that incentives to the user/ policyholders as well as to the agents and the rural career agents would be instrumental in promoting the insurance business, provided the insurance professionals innovate the same, much earlier than their competitors.

Personal selling

The personal selling occupies a place of outstanding significance. This is due to the fact that the insurance business is substantially influenced by the instrumentality of agents and the rural career agents. If they are aware of the art of informing, sensing and persuading the potential policyholders, the task of insurance organisations is simplified considerably.

Personal selling is based on the excellence of an individual. This focuses our attention on the ability of an individual to influence the impulse by activating the persuasion process. This makes it significant that the agents as well as the rural career agents have certain outstanding properties or attributes, such as patience, communicative ability, attractive personality and commitment to the profession. Hence the insurance organizations are supposed to assign due weightage to the excellence in an individual who is assigned this responsibility. The need to provide due incentive to the agents so that they work satisfactorily and keep on moving the process of informing and persuading the policyholders/ prospects. While recruiting agents, the insurance professionals need to be careful so that persons with high communicative ability, an attractive physique and everlasting patience are assigned the responsibility of acting as an agent. The branch managers bear the responsibility of managing and developing the agents by monitoring their contributions to the process of increasing the insurance business. They are supposed to organize refresher courses to develop the agents so that the emerging trends in the investment potentials of a command area vis-à-vis the changing level of expectations of the policyholders/ prospects are transmitted to them in a right fashion and on time. The personal selling thus requires an intensive care. It is high time that the **Career Agents Schemes** and the **Rural Career Agents' Schemes** are promoted.

Word-of-mouth promotion

The word-of-mouth communications result into wider publicity which substantially sensitive the process of influencing the impulse of users/ prospects of the insurance services. The satisfied group of customers, the opinion leaders, the social reformists, the popular personalities acts as word-of-mouth communicators. The insurance organizations need to assign due weightage to the quality of service made available to the users. The insurance professionals are also supposed to seek the cooperation of opinion leaders, vocal persons for promoting the business and for that the offering of small gifts to them is required essential.

Another dimension of this component of the promotion mix is to seek the cooperation of users who are satisfied with the services. They are habitual users and therefore it is natural that they talk to their friends and relatives about your positive contributions. The advertisements slogans may be insensitive, even the sales promotion measures may be ineffective but the positive feelings of your friends and relations communicated to you can't be ineffective. This makes it clear that the most important thing in the promotion of any business is the quality of services that you offer to your users/ customers.

Price Mix

In the insurance business, the pricing decisions are concerned with the premium charged against the policies interest charged for defaulting the payment of premium and credit facilities, commission charged for underwriting and consultancy services. The formulating of pricing strategies becomes significant with the viewpoint of influencing the target market or prospects. It is pertinent that the insurance organisations in general and public sector insurance organizations in particular adopt such a strategy for pricing that makes it a motivational tool and paves the ways for increasing the insurance business. This necessitates a new vision for setting premium structure and paying the bonus and charging the interest.

The insurance organizations prefer to make a mix of high a low pricing strategy. To be more specific, in the public sector insurance organisations which are instrumental in offering policies, schemes for the weaker sections, it is pertinent that the pricing strategy is rationalized to cater to the low paying capacity of the concerned segment. However the insurance organisations would be required to think in favour of a high pricing strategy for the affluent section of the society. The motive is to make the premium structure commercially viable so that the insurance organizations succeed in having a sound product portfolio besides fuelling development orientation.

The pricing decisions make it essential that the insurers keep in their minds the nature of policy vis-à-vis the segment to which the prospects belong. The insurance executives bear the responsibility of

managing the pricing decisions in such a way that a rational premium structure is possible. There are number of factors influencing the rate of premium, such as the positive developments in the socio-economic environment, growing healthcare facilities, rising standard of living of the masses, increasing discretionary income, increasing rate of literacy, attitudinal change in investors or so. The investment decisions of insurance organisation are also found instrumental in influencing the costs.

Price Mix

Another component of the marketing mix is related to the place decisions. While locating branches, the branch managers need to consider a number of factors, such as smooth accessibility, availability of infrastructural facilities and the management of branch offices and premises. In addition, it is also significant that the branch managers assign due weightage to the safety provision. The places found of vulnerable nature should not be selected for the location of branch offices and the users' safety vis-à-vis the safety of insurance personnel and cash need due attention. The management of offices makes it significant that the branch managers are particular to the office furnishing, civic amenities and facilities, parking facilities and interior office decoration. The foreign insurance companies are found serious to this component of place management which helps them in attracting the users. Besides, the management of premises is also an important component since of late the management experts make a strong advocacy in favour of aesthetic management for generating the work culture and motivating the users. The plantation, gardening, dustbin, drains, sign posts are some of the important facets which makes your premises attractive and healthy.

In view of the above, it is right to opine that the place management of insurance branch offices needs a new vision, a distinct approach and an innovative strategy. This is essential to make the work place conducive, attractive, proactive to the generation of efficiency or so. The motives are to offer the promised services to the end users without any distortion and making the branch offices a point of attraction. The branch managers need professional excellence to make place decision productive.

People

The management scientists make a strong advocacy in favour of managing the insurance personnel since they identify people as an important component of the marketing mix. This focuses our attention on the development of insurance professionals. The use of computers, micro-computers, fax machines, sophisticated telephonic services, e-mailing, internet and intranet services have a big impact on the perception of quality of services. This makes it essential that the insurance organisation also think in favour of developing personnel in line with the development and use of information technologies. This gravitates attention on the education and training facilities to the insurance personnel. The front-line-

staff as well as the branch managers are required to be given the training facilities so that they are in a position to make possible an effective use of the technologies. The insurance organisations bear the responsibility of developing the credentials of their employees. The senior executives while recruiting, training and developing the insurance personnel make it sure that employees serving the organisation have a high behavioral profile in which empathy has been given due place.

The marketing management of an organisation plays a contributory role in fuelling the processes of qualitative-cum-quantitative improvements. The different mixes are required to be innovated to cater to the changing needs and requirements of the different categories of users. The product mix necessitates a fair synchronization of core and peripheral services, the product portfolio is required to be made optimal, the packages need due attention in the formulation process, the new services are required to be incorporated, the unprofitable services or schemes are required to be eliminated and the effective fulfillment of development needs require world class insurance professionals who by making their decision innovative are found successful in having a sound product mix. In addition, the promotion decisions also need a new vision, a distinct approach mix. In addition, the promotion decision also need a new vision, a distinct approach and an new strategy. The sophistication in the process of advertising, the creativity in advertisement messages and slogans, the well managed public relation activities, the innovative tools of sale promotion, the word-of-mouth communications, the personal selling, and the telemarketing need due attention of marketing executives. The premium, bonus, commission policies need to be made rational and the place decision require due weightage. The management of insurance personnel requires an overriding priority and the physical attractions of insurance professionals are to be given due weightage.

In view of the above, it is right to opine that the marketing practices need a new look, an innovative approach and the conceptualization of the holistic concept of management. The defined principles of social or societal marketing if practiced in a right fashion would pave avenues for the blending of three important considerations, such as profit-generation, customer-satisfaction and social-orientation. It is in this context that the public sector insurance organizations need to realize gravity of the situation and to assign an overriding priority to the management of marketing activities.

Hospital Marketing

Hospital is a social institution for delivering healthcare, offering considerable advantages to both patient and society. It is considered to be a place for the diagnosis and treatment of human ills and restoration of health and well-being of those temporarily deprived of. Above all, it is a social institution responsible for protecting the social interests and a non-profit organisation.

We have failed in improving the medicate facilities keeping pace with the growing requirements but have been successful in making the environment unhealthy which is found raising the pressure on both the government as well as the private hospitals. In view of the prevailing condition, we expect much more from hospitals government of private. By marketing medicate services, the hospitals would not only serve masses but would also be efficacious in inculcating mass awareness to prevent ailments and to decrease the number of prospects.

Marketing of medicare services means, making available the medicare services to the users in such a way that they get quality services at a reasonable cost. The social marketing principles focus on making available the services even to those segments of the society who are not in a position to pay for the prices. It is in this context that a managerial approach to formulate a sound service mix is required.

Marketing Mix for Hospital Services

The components of marketing mix namely, product, price, place and promotion could be applied for effective marketing of hospital services.

Product mix

The service programming for hospitals include different types of services required to protect the public interests. The services have been classified as line services, supportive services and auxiliary services.

The first one, line services include emergency services, outdoor and indoor services, intensive care unit and operations theatre. This is also called core services.

The supporting services in a true sense determine the quality of services made available by medical and para-medical personnel.

The auxiliary services consists of registration and indoor case records, stores management, transportation management, mortuary arrangement, dietary services, engineering and maintenance services For effectives marketing these services are to be managed in an effective way.

Promotion Mix

In the medicare services innovating the promotional measures and inculcating mass awareness are important for promotion of hospital services. For making available right services to the right users at the right time, it is essential to instrumentalise the personal promotion. In this context, both the core and

para-medical personnel play an important role. To be more specific, the frontline personnel have been found playing an outstanding role. If nurses neglect patients, if receptionist miscommunicate users, prospects, if doctors do not show human approach, the medicare services even after the availability of most sophisticated equipment and technologies, most efficient doctors and nurses, most comfortable buildings and infrastructural facilities would fails in delivering the goods to the society. Ultimately, the personnel determine the magnet of success and not the supporting forces.

Advertisement and publicity measures are important to promote medical services. While advertising, the hospitals and health care centres should make possible creativity in their campaigns, messages and slogans for the prospects to avail the services.

Service promotion is an important dimension of promotion, which is found instrumental in the generation of efficiency, formation of a team spirit, establishment of a work culture and more so a personal touch in service. This requires a team work and involvement of all the medical and para-medical personnel.

The word of mouth communication also plays an outstanding role. The satisfied users act an agent in spreading the message to their friends, relatives and others, who are found motivated and prefer to user the services of that hospital as and when the circumstances necessitates so.

Price Mix

Now the hospitals need to invest a lot on the sophisticated equipment and technologies to improve the quality of medical aid. Increasing cost on inputs in found aggravating the setting the task of fee structure which makes possible a fair synchronization of users' and hospitals interests'. The fees strategy for hospitals should be in proportion to the income of the users which would engineer a sound foundation for qualitative or quantitative improvements. For a social institution like hospital, a discriminatory fee structure is suitable, since it provides even weaker sections of the society an opportunity to avail the quality medical services.

Place Mix

For effective distribution of medicare services it is essential that the hospitals should be able to provide basic medical services at different parts of residential areas and also to rural areas in particular. Further, wherever there is concentration of users' like industrial establishments, educational institutions, the hospitals must be able to take their services to those places.

To conclude for marketing of hospital services innovation is a must. The aim should be to serve the society; to improve quality; to make services cost effective; to minimize the medicare needs and in due course to minimize the pressure on hospitals.

Telecommunication Marketing

Telecommunication services play an incremental role in the multi-dimensional development activities. A well functioning telecommunications network is an essential component of economic infrastructure. The application of modern marketing principles in the telecommunication services would make ways for the generation of profits and at the same time would also make the services affordable to the users at large. The telecommunications organizations are supposed to market the services in such a way that a high level of efficiency generates a high level of profit. With the growing sophistication in the process of telecommunication technologies, multi-faceted services are being offered by the telecommunication organisation which is managed and controlled as a government department by the Ministry of Communications. Telecommunications marketing focuses on marketing the services professionally and this makes it a managerial process. The marketing professionals bear the responsibility of managing the services which enrich the service profile of telecom in order that the world class services are made nationally and internationally competitive.

Marketing Mix for Telecommunication Organizations

The formulation of a sound marketing mix is found essential to make possible an optimal development of marketing resources. The marketing professionals bear the responsibility of developing optimal marketing inputs so that the world class services reach to the different segments of users in a right way. It is in this context the formulation of marketing mix for telecommunication is considered. It goes through the different submixes such as the product mix covering the designing of a quality services profile, the promotion mix having more creativity and sensitivity, the tariff policy making possible designing of a sound tariff structure, the place mix containing the problem of processing the services with the motto of bridging over the gap between services – promised and services – offered and the people mix for striking a balance between performance-orientation and employee-orientation.

Product Mix

The telecommunication organizations offer multi-dimensional services to the different categories of domestic and institutional users. telecommunication include a number of services such as the telephonic service including cell services, telegraphic services, e-mailing services, fax services, internet services and so on. On one hand the telecom organisations feel that the services are quite satisfactory, while on the other hand there are increasing cases of dissatisfaction among the users. This makes it essential that sincere efforts to be made to improve the quality of service.

In the category of services mix, the telephonic services occupy a place of outstanding significance because of majority of the users of almost all the categories are found using the same. With the

development of cordless and cellular phones, we find a change in the nature of services. In this context, it is the prime responsibility of the telecommunication organisations to make it sure that users get quality services, such as services with a dismal breakdown, noise and interruption, quality audio-delivery or so. The cases of one-way are to be checked. The technical personnel are required to make it sure that the users are made available quality instruments and the replacement is made possible as the when the circumstance necessitate so.

The marketing professionals bear the responsibility of making it sure that a sound services profile is designed in which both the categories of services, such as core and peripheral are optimally blended. The innovation in the formulation of a services portfolio needs to be given due weightage. The main think in the process is to formulate a service mix that makes the ways for profit-generation vis-à-vis user-satisfaction.

In view of the above, it is right to mention that like other organizations, the telecommunication organisation also need to formulate a sound product mix that focuses our attention on offering of the world class services so that the level of efficiency is increased and the task of marketing professionals is made easier.

Promotion Mix

This submix of the marketing mix focuses on creative promotional measures helping the telecom organisations in informing, sensing and persuading the users. In this context, different constituents of promotion, such as advertising, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, word-of-mouth promotion are discussed.

Advertising

Like other organizations, the telecommunication organisations may also advertise with the help of media. All the three media, such as the print media, broadcast media and telecast media can be used for that very purpose. While advertising, the marketing professionals in general and the advertising professionals in particular are supposed to make the slogans, themes and appeals more creative so that the target prospects are sensitized in a right way. The print media may be more effective since while advertising through this media, an organization gets adequate space to inform and sense the users.

In addition, they can also advertise through the broadcast media. Telecast media emerging as the most effective media found very much instrumental in sensitizing the prospects. With the help of audio-visual exposures, it is possible to inform and sense the users and the prospects. The advertising professionals having world class excellence are to be engaged for that purpose who would design advertisement

layout, compose slogans and messages bearing more creativity. If they are professionally sound, the advertising budget would also be made optimal.

Publicity

Another component of promotion focuses on publicizing the business with the support of media personnel and opinion leaders. The telecom organizations may use this constituent with the motto of informing the prospects the salient features of innovative services offered or to be included in the services mix. The marketing professionals or the public relation officers need to accept the responsibility of developing rapport with the media people, to arrange for them lunch or dinner and to offer to them some small gifts to write news items or articles related to the services and to place them at the eye catching locations. It is in this context that we talk about the instrumentality of public relations activities in promoting the telecom business.

Sales promotion

It is essential that the telecommunication organisation makes use of sales promotion measures for promoting the innovative services, specially used by the large-sized customers. If the prospects are offered some small gifts, the motivation process would be switched on. In addition, they also need to offer innovative tools of sales promotion to some of the high performers in the group of employees who instrumentalise the process of getting the profitable business. This would considerably be helpful in tapping the market potentials which would activate the process of profit generation.

Personal selling

The instrumentality of personal selling is involved in the essence of promoting the business with the support and cooperation of sales people. The telecommunication organisations are required to promote its business to tap the sales potentials or the market potentials which remain untapped or partially tapped due to a communications gap. The role of personal selling becomes important in the context of privatization of telecom services and due to emergence of buyers' market.

Word-of-mouth promotion

This constituent of the promotion mix is found based on the quality of services offered by the service generating organisations. In the telecommunication organisations, we find this component instrumental because the satisfied group of users would narrate to their friends, relatives, well wishers regarding the outstanding services they experienced as a customer. The individuals trust on their relatives and friends and therefore use the services as and when the circumstances necessitate so. It is in this context that we make a strong advocacy in favour of improving the quality of services by the telecommunications

organisatoin. The support and cooperation of opinion leaders or vocal persons would also be effective in the process.

The aforesaid components of promotion are found helpful to the telecommunication organizations in promotion the business. The main thing in the promotion is to inform, sense and persuade the prospects or users in such a way that they are transformed into the habitual users. The instrumentality of a particular constituent would depend upon the prevailing conditions.

Price Mix

Almost all the organizations either producing goods or generating services find pricing decisions significant to the development process. In the context of telecommunication organisatoin the different categories of users buy the services and therefore the telecommunication organisatoin is required to be more careful in setting the tariff structure. The main thing is the designing of a rational tariff structure which on the one hand makes the ways for profit-generation while on the other hand also make the services affordable to the users.

The telecommunication organisation adopts a discriminatory policy of pricing. The special categories of users are given subsidized or concessional services, such as the rurual users, new or budding entrepreneurs, new institutions promoting welfare or so. I this context, it is important to mentioni that the telecommunication organisatoin charges different slabl of tariff for different operational hours. There is also provision for special concession on selected days and festivals. Thus diversified pricing strategy is adopted by the telecommunication organisation to generate revenue. The Telecom Regulatory Authority plays an significant role in making the pricing decisions in the Indian context

The pricing decisions and the tariff structure also depend upon the nature and types of services offered by the telecommunications organisatoin. For the data/fax services, facsimile services, internet services, there is a different slab and base. The pricing decisions are of sensitive in nature. The governmental interference in the process of making the pricing decision is to be checked to be extent it is found legitimate. The revision in tariff structure, licensing fee have a close relation with the costs of services.

The aforesaid facts makes it clear that the telecommunication organisatoins need freedom while setting the tariff-structure. The marketing professionals serving the telecommunications organisatoins are supposed to be aware of the business as well as the social responsibilities. For promoting business, they need to generate more revenue and for enriching the social profile, they need to strike a balance between the organizational strength and the social requirements.

Place Mix

In the place mix, we need to gravitate our attention on two important issues, first the promised services reach to the ultimate users in a decent way and second the location points for the telecommunication services.

The first problem is related to the processing of services in which the marketing professionals are supposed to be sure that whatever the services have been promised are delivered to the ultimate users in decent way.

In addition to the aforesaid problem, we also find cases of unplanned and inconvenient location. The administrative offices in particular are required to be accessible. The users and personnel working there should not face difficulties while visiting the offices. Thus the place decisions becomes important to the telecommunication organisations.

People

In the formulations of marketing mix, we also need to manage the human resources in an effective way. The Department of Telecommunications has been facing the problem of inadequacy of quality people resulting into low level of efficiency, deceleration in productivity and profitability or so. The increasing domination of trade unions in the day-do-day activities makes it difficult for the management to bring things on the rail. The trade unions also feel that poor level of efficiency is substantially on account of inefficient employees but very often they don't find it essential to regulate them.

In view of the above, the marketing professionals are required to assign due weightage to the people mix. The telecommunication organisatoin is also supposed to assign an overriding priority to the Total Quality Management that focuses innovative schemes attention on quality technologies, quality employees, quality environmental conditions at the workplace, reasonable tariff structure, and above all, personalized services to the consumers.

Education Marketing

An important question may be raised here that why do we use the term marketing for literacy. Since we have been investing huge amount of money and deploying a good number of personnel and sophisticated technologies to literate the masses, it is judicious to know about the results, if we invest more for removing illiteracy (inputs) but the literacy (output) is not increasing proportionately, the policy would be deemed to be unproductive since it is cost-ineffective. The very essence of marketing is to make our policies and programmes cost-effective so that we cross the target or atleast even touch the target without crossing the financial and time limits. The marketing practices bear the efficacy of improving the input-output ratio since we frame a service mix keeping in view the sensitivity of target prospects, attempt to promote the same by using modern sophisticated devices, frame a fee-structure in the face of holistic concept of management and channelize the services with the support of efficient and personally committed personnel acting and behaving professionally.

In view of the aforesaid facts, we use the term marketing for literacy, education and development of knowledge. Here, it is also to be clarified that by using the term marketing we are not bound to generate profits. Since most of the not-for-profit making organizations are now found liberal to the generation of profits, it is also significant to mention that whatever they generate as surplus should essentially be re-invested or ploughed back for the development and expansion of world class services. The simple logic in using the term marketing is to make available to the prospects the quality services either free of cost or for the fee-structure they are supposed to pay. The marketing practices would simplify the processes of qualitative-cum-quantitative transformation in the process of efficiency generation.

The universities, colleges, institutes, studies and research centers are found engaged in the process of offering higher education. Scientific inventions and innovations, technological advances, professional excellence, managerial proficiency are some of the important dimensions playing a decisive role in shaping the destiny of a nation. The system of higher education is found efficacious in making available to the society a dedicated, committed, devoted and professionally – sound team of human resources who decide the future of a nation. Against this background, the crying need of the hour is to manage the system of higher education in such a way that sets a right direction for the development of human resources in the national and international perspectives.

The universities, colleges, institutes, research centers are found in depleted condition. The financial crunch is a major problem which has been disallowing these centers to importance the time honoured changes in their curriculum even if they are found dying. Except a very few almost all the centers are engaged in producing substandard outputs resulting into unemployment, poverty and backwardness. It is

in this context that we talk in favour of marketing higher education which according to the holistic marketing principles attempts to enrich the efficiency of these centers vis-à-vis offer quality services even to the poor persons having an outstanding educational background. This is based on the principles of societal marketing in which the educational institutions are not supposed to make profits. Thus, the marketing practices pave ways for the development of human resources in the face of international specifications. Here, the qualitative transformation establishes an edge over the quantitative transfiguration.

Marketing of Distance Education

The distance education system has come into stay as an accepted form of education and has been gaining wide-spread popularity in recent years. This is evident from the fact that more than 70 countries are offering educational programmes through distance education all over the world today. The distance education has made it possible for those in inaccessible areas; the drop-outs, who want re-entry into education and the economically weaker sections to avail of educational opportunities. It can be a particular boon for women, since parents are unwilling to send them beyond their immediate locale for education after the completion of school education.

At present there are 10 open universities in India. Further, among 229 conventional Universities, 62 are dual mode Universities offering education both under regular and distance education modes. Distance education now caters over 7 lacs of students. It is expected that this growth would outnumber the formal system itself in the near future. Thus there is potential market for distance education. As many as 72 Universities are vying each other to attract higher enrolment of their distance education programs. It is partly due to the fact that almost all the Universities greatly depend on distance education programmes for generating their own financial resources. Hence, unless these Distance Education Institutes adopt systematic and effective marketing, it would be very difficult for them to survive in the long-run. This paper makes an attempt to explain the strategies to be adopted for successful marketing of distance education programmes by the Distance Education Institutes.

Market Segmentation

The distance education learners belong to different segments. The major segments of distance education learners are – rural and urban, drop-outs, elder persons who did not have the opportunity to learn through regular stream in their early age and those who want to update knowledge and acquire special skill. Besides these, other specific segments are women, socially backward and physically handicapped. Appropriate marketing strategies need to be evolved for reaching these unreached group through distance and open learning.

Learner-orientation

The learner oriented marketing approach is concerned with identifying the specific educational needs of the target market and tailoring and delivery of those educational programmes to the satisfaction of learners. It involves identifying the right type of product mix of educational programmes, offered at right price, through effective delivery mechanisms and with appropriate promotional tools. In other words, all activities and strategies of DEIs ultimately aim at satisfying the learners.

Marketing Mix

The marketing mix concept is a well established tool used as a structure by marketers. It consists of the various elements of a marketing programme which need to be considered in order to successfully implement the marketing strategy for any service business. The major elements are Products, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical Evidence, People and Process. The underlying concept in developing each of these elements is to use them to support each other, to reinforce the positioning of the product and to deliver appropriate service quality to achieve competitive advantage.

Product mix

Distance Education is a service product and has a complex set of value satisfactions. People attach value to distance education in proportion to the perceived ability of the service to do this. Value is assigned by the buyers in relation to the benefits they receive. Augmentation of the expected product represents a means of creating product differentiation and thus added value from the customer perspective. In Distance Education service, the academic programmes offered are core products. The expected product consists of the generic product together with the minimal support facilities which need to be met. The augmented product is the area which enables one product to be differentiate from another. They differentiate by 'adding value' to the core product in terms of reliability and responsiveness. Thus, in Distance Education, the academic programmes offered are core product; the quality learning materials and effective contact programmes are expected products and specialized programmes are augmented products.

Service Product Decisions

DEIs offer a range of academic programmes. Decisions on the range of services to be offered need to be considered in the context of the DEIs positioning strategy and the competitors' service offerings. New courses to be offered should also be consistent with the competence of the DEI to deliver them.

Market Penetration

Market penetration by DEIs is concerned with how to exploit the current position in the market place better. This can be achieved by more focused segmentation, a more clearly defined positioning strategy or through better application of the marketing mix elements. Essentially it is concerned with gaining greater productivity from the marketing mix elements and building market share for its distance education programme.

Market Development

An alternative strategy to service development is to undertake market extension, which seeks new groups of buyers with a firm's current service offerings. For instance, many DEIs have opened their Study Centres in overseas to attract foreign clients.

The Distance Education Institutes (DEIs) should have a right type of product mix to suit the requirements of different segments of distance education learners. Different educational programmes should be designed in such a way that it suits to different segments. A particular segment which would like to acquire a higher qualification for the sake of higher qualification looks for a course which would like to acquire a higher qualification for the sake of higher qualification looks for a course which they would like to acquire without much effort and a specific need. The Distance Education Institutions are also able to get a good enrolment for such type general academic programme. A degree in history is a good example that suits for mass marketing. Another segment of learners which belong to class marketing is a specific group which require specialized knowledge and skill in their chosen area of interest. The Distance Education Institutes have to identify such type of specialized academic programmes suited to specific segment of learners. For instance, the Distance Education Institutes of the Alagappa University offer specialized courses on bank management, sports management, corporate secretary ship, women's studies, child care, marketing, digital instrumentation and waste water treatment.

The important aspect of Distance Education Institutes is that they have to constantly study the requirements of intending learners and must develop need based new educational programmes. Such programmes are to be developed for different levels such as certificate, diploma, under-graduate and post-graduate depending on the learner's need.

Because of increased sophistication, each individual must be a multidisciplinary. He may be an expert in one field but necessary requires considerable knowledge in related fields also. For example, even a physician need to have basic engineering knowledge due to advanced medical equipments he has to deal with. Though Computer Engineering is a specialized field, the knowledge of computer operations has become a basic need to every individual working in any field. For instance, course on E-Commerce,

Medical Transcriptions, Information Technology Enabled Services are in great demand now. Hence, there is a great potential for information Technology education with the DEIs can effectively explore by developing appropriate programme suited to different segments.

Similarly, the curriculum and the course materials of the existing course need to be revised/ modified periodically, depending on the requirement. For instance, the curriculum on computer education, economic legislations, and tax laws require frequent revision and up-gradation.

Physical Evidence

This is the service firm's physical environment where the service is created and where the service provider and customer interact, plus may tangible elements that are used to communicate or support the role of the service. In a service business, the marketer should seek to compensate for the intangibility dimension by providing physical clues to support the positioning and image and enhance the product surround.

Physical evidence can be divided into two types – essential and peripheral. Essential physical evidence in distance education represents the key decisions made by the DEIs about the design of the learning resources such as, print materials and pre-recorded audio-video cassettes.

It is the fact that the success and effectiveness of distance education systems largely depend on the study materials, because the learners have less contact with the institution / teachers. Hence, they have to be supplied with specially prepared teaching materials prepared under Self-Instructional Pattern. The course materials are presented in such a way that a learner can learn from the materials independently and the materials themselves have to perform the functions of a teacher such as expounding, explaining, guiding, motivating, reminding, evaluating etc. this is a the essential part of physical evidence. It is worth mentioning the role played by Distance Education Council (DEC), common wealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMA) and Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) and Educational Media Research Centres (EMRC) in conducting training, research and guidance in the area of preparation of self-instructional materials, multi-media, staff development, computerization and networking.

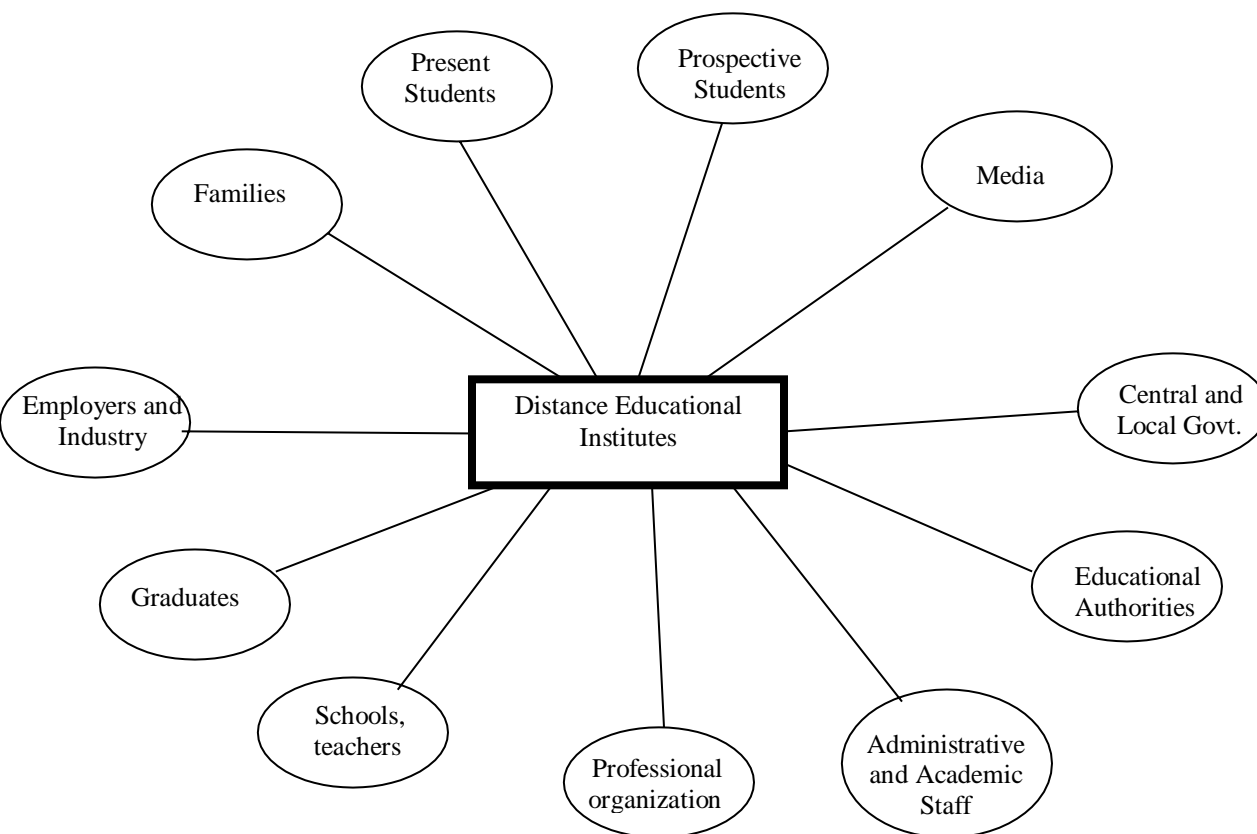
The logical arrangement of contents, the lucid style, conversational language, use of personal pronouns and division of content into small manageable learning steps shall increase the effectiveness of learning. Beside these, even the quality of paper used, printing and the size of letters also count in stimulating the learners to use the course materials. This forms the peripheral physical evidence of the product and adds tangibility to the value of the service provided to the learner segment to which it is directed.

Quality

The distance education system is criticized for the lack of quality. It is argued that for the sake of quantity, quality is very often sacrificed. The DEIs should ensure that quality is maintained along with the increase in enrolment. Hence, what is required is some sort of 'ISI Mark' for the Distance Education institutes to ensure quality. The Distance Education Council in consultation with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council is in the process of developing some sort of Quality Assessment and Accreditation that will be relevant to the Distance and Open Education system.

Public relations

Public relations is defined by the British Institute of Public Relations as, "the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill between an organisation and its publics". These 'publics' are all the groups of people and organisations which have an interests in the distance education programme. An example of the main publics of distance education is shown in the following figure:



Public relations is concerned with a number of marketing tasks. These include the following :

- Building or maintaining image
- Supporting the other communication activities
- Handling problems and issues

- Reinforcing positioning
- Influencing specific publics
- Assisting the launch of new services

A service organization's 'image' is made up of the collective experience, views attitudes and beliefs held about it. Public relations can use a range of communication approaches to improve or maintain the image of a DEI. Overall the objective with image is to ensure that a particular DEI is viewed more favorably than competitors in the market segment it serves.

A wide range of tools can be used in the design of a Public Relation programme. These could include-

- Publications including press releases, annual reports, brochures, posters etc.
- Press conferences, seminars and conferences
- Exhibitions and trade fairs

As with other elements of the communications mix, a Public Relation programme should follow a process, which consists of the specification of objectives, determining the mix of Public Relations activities to be undertaken. Implementing an integrated programme and evaluating the results.

Word-of-mouth promotion

Research points to personal recommendations through word of mouth being one of the most important information sources. One of the most distinctive features of promotion in Distance Education marketing is the greater importance of referral and word of mouth communications. This highlights the importance of the people factor in services promotion. Learners are often closely involved in the delivery of a service and they talk to other potential customers about their experiences. They are glad to offer advice on a specific DEI. Thus, word of mouth can have an important impact that other mass or personal communication mix elements in distance education.

Gronroos has outlined a communication pattern that illustrates the role of word of mouth and referrals have to play.

- Expectations / purchases
- Interactions
- Experiences
- Word of mouth / referrals

An existing or a new distance education learner has certain expectations. Once the decision to join distance education has been made, the candidate begins interacting with the DEI and discovers the technical and functional quality of the service being supplied. As a result of the experiences, that follow

from these interactions and the judgments made about service quality, the candidate may or may not return. Positive or negative word of mouth communication will then influence the extent to which others use the service. It is said that the ‘satisfied consumer is a better sales force’.

When the programmes are offered with better issues materials, effective delivery system, proper organizations of Personal Contact Programmes, effective student support services, proper conduct of examinations and timely announcement of results – the satisfied learner will be acting as an effective ambassador for Distance Education Institute.

The multiplier effect from word of mouth varies from situations to situation. However, negative experiences tend to have a greater impact than positive experiences. Learners who are dissatisfied tend to tell more than twice as many people of their bitter experiences. Thus, negative word of mouth can significantly reduce the effectiveness of advertising and other elements of the communications mix and positive word of mouth can result in less expensive formal communications programmes being needed.

Direct Marketing

In recent years more sophisticated approaches to direct marketing have been adopted. Developments in electronic media, telecommunications and computers are now presenting greater opportunities for developing an integrated programme of direct marketing activities. These can be used in conjunction with each other to reinforce the personal selling, advertising and other promotional elements. Many DEIs are taking the advantage of the benefits of a coordinated, direct marketing programme. Contacting the potential feeding centres, wherever there are cluster of prospective learners, could be another effective tool. For example contacting Banking / Insurance institutions could help promoting courses on banking, insurance etc. it is only the effective teaching that creates a lasting impression on the minds of the learners and help create goodwill on DEI.

People

The success of marketing of distance education programmes is tied closely to the selection, training, motivating and management of people. There are many examples of distance education programmes failing or succeeding as a consequences of the ineffective or effective management of people.

The importance of people within the marketing of services has led to great interest in internal marketing. Internal marketing aims to encourage effective behaviour by staff. Which will attract customers to the firm. This means that, the Distance Education Institutions should ensure that their employees should have the desirable behaviour that will attract learners to the institute. While the expression ‘our employees are our greatest asset’ is increasingly being heard among organisatoin. It is clear that this statement is often a platitude. By recognizing the contribution, people make to acquiring and keeping

customers, within the overall marketing mix, the service company's competitive performance will be substantially enhances.

The idea behind internal marketing is to ensure that all members of the staff in the DEI provide the best possible contribution to the marketing of education programmes and successfully complete all telephone, mail electronic and personal interactions with the learners in manner that adds value to the service encounter.

Internal marketing in all its forms was recognized as an important activity in contributing to the people element of marketing mix and in developing a customer focused organisation. In practice, internal marketing is concerned with communications, with developing responsiveness, responsibility and unity of purpose. The fundamental aims of internal marketing are to develop internal and external customer awareness and remove functional barriers to organisation effectiveness.

Processes

The processes by which services are created and delivered to the customer is a major factor within the services marketing mix. All work activity is process. Processes involve the procedures, tasks schedules, mechanisms, activities and routines by which a product or service is delivered to the customer. It involves policy decisions about customer involvement and employee discretion. Identification of process management as a separate activity is a prerequisite of service quality improvement. The importance of this element is especially highlighted in service businesses.

If the DEI functions effectively with a well established administered systems and procedures, it shall have a clear advantage over less efficient competitors. For example, a DEI which ensures proper recording of 'change of address' of a particular learner, will be seen as being efficient. If there is any confusion in recording of changes in address of the learners, is likely to be more critical of others services offered by the DEI.

Thus, the successful marketing of distance education requires identifying and devolping right type of educational programmes, pricing theme within the reach of the learners, making the programmes available at the places convenient to the learners and promoting them with suitable pormotioanl tools. Further, the success of marketing of distance education is tied closely to be behaviour of the members of he staff working in the DEIs. The well established procedures and systems in the functioning of the Institute is an added advantage. Above all, in the case of duel mode universities, the Distance Education Institute is a major sub-system and requires administrative, academic and financial support and freedom to make the marketing of distance education effective and efficient.

