

CASE STUDY WITH ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION:

CASE STUDY 1:

Passengers were through with their final security check and were boarding their aircraft at Delhi. The Lotus Airlines personnel were awaiting the arrival of a VIP to clear their take off. Finally the VIP arrived an hour late and went directly for their security check. During the check the security personnel came across a revolver with live cartridges. He was requested not to carry the weapon on the flight. However, the VIP refused to part with the weapon for personal security. When he was asked of license, he said he was not carrying it. The security personnel refused to permit the VIP to board the aircraft. This further delayed the flight. The passengers were restless since they were sitting in the aircraft for nearly two hours. To top it they were not allowed to leave the aircraft for security reasons.

To top it, when the flight was ready for take-off, due to fog the flight was further delayed. The passengers got infuriated. The parting greeting was given "Hope you enjoyed the flight just before landing. As if this was not enough, the passengers had to wait for one more hour for luggage clearance.

Questions:

- (1) What are the service Gaps and how would you close them?
- (2) Elaborate the importance of people in the airline service.
- (3) Explain the service Marketing Triangle with reference to this case.

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ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION:

- (1) The assessment of quality takes place in the customer's mind simultaneously as services are created and delivered. the customers level of satisfaction is largely influenced by the difference between customer's expectation and perception of service performance whom the delivered service is perceived to be better than expected, the outcome is that the customer is satisfied and vice-versa.

The service gap is the difference between customer's expectation and perception of service performance gap" analysis involves analysing current market offering to assess the extent to which they meet customer demands. demand side gaps involve a market situation where consumers are not satisfied buying what is available—usually either because the level of service provided is not adequate or because the offering is too expensive. supply side gaps, in contrast, involve firms that provide services that are needed, but ones that can be met elsewhere at lower prices the gap between expected service and delivered services has its origin at different points: gap 1: Customer's expectation (not knowing what customers expect): gap 2: Management perception of customers expectation (not selecting the right service design standard): gap 3: Service delivery. (not delivering to service standards) gap 4: external marketing communication. (not marching performance to promises) gap 5: Actual service performance. (the customer gap)

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR CLOSING SERVICE GAPS:

Gap 1: Prescription: Learn what customer expects:

Gap 2: Prescription: Establish the Right Quality Standards:

Gap 3: Prescription: Ensure that performance meets standards:

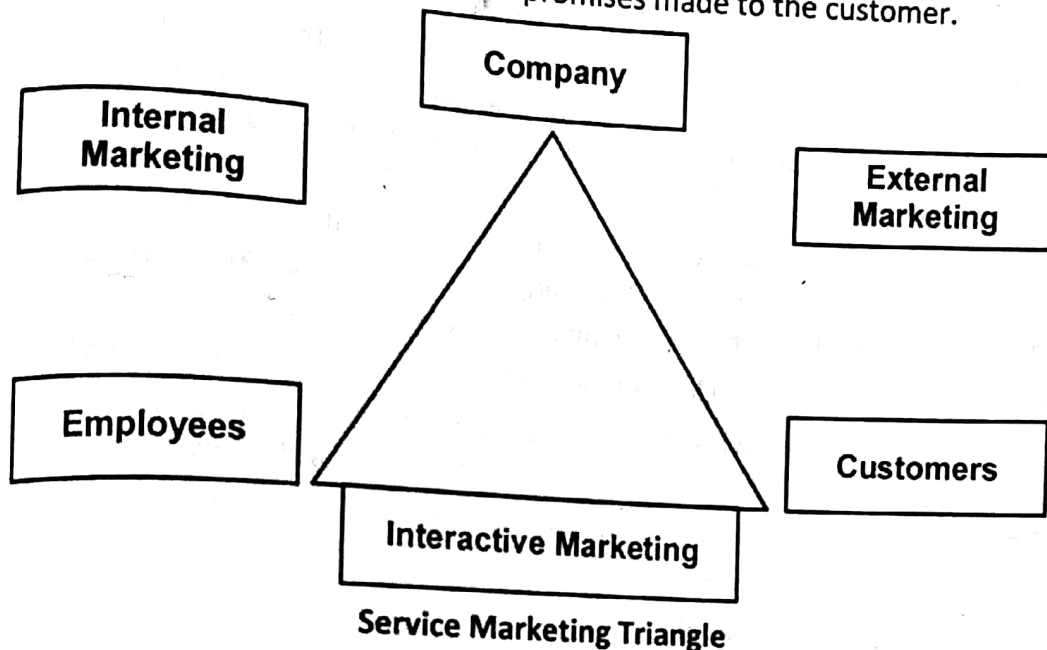
Gap 4: Prescription: Ensure that delivery matches promises:

- (2) **Importance of people in airline services:** There are many personnel needed to run an airline efficiently. Teams include- engineers to see to maintenance, re-fuellers, rampies to ensure loading is carried out correctly. flight operations, to ensure safe timetables for arrival and departures, baggage handlers, cleaners, check-in staff, cabin crew supervisors, flight attendants, pilots and other technical crew, air traffic controllers, to name but a few. Each makes an important contribution, that is indispensable. In this service industry the service provider comes in direct contact with the user in the course of production and consumption of services. As people provide most of the services, the selection, training and motivation of the employees can make a great difference in attaining customer satisfaction. The service provider should be competent, have a caring attitude, be responsive, take the initiative and have the ability to solve problems. The physical presence and the percentage of time the customer is present reflect the customer contact. Service with high contact are more difficult to manage and control because of the degree of variability in the quality, demand and nature of service. In the air-line industry the air-hostess is the service contact personnel who is expected to possess a pleasing personality with polite service handling. On the other hand the cock-pit crew who is categorised as a low contact personnel, requires to possess high analytical and technical attributes. The travel agent in the air-line industry is an ancillary service personnel who helps to create the service exchange but is not a part of the service. While delivering services air-line ensures that the service is delivered as promised. This is controlled by the front-line staff and requires some amount of reliability which in turn affects the degree of responsiveness sought from the customers. The quality of service provided by the front-line is highly dependent on their ability to communicate their credibility. Airlines deliver caring and individualized attention to customers through their airhostess. Empathy implies that their personnel will listen, adapt and be flexible in delivering the needs of the customer. Alongwith empathy the appearance of the employees are important aspect as it forms the tangible dimension of quality along with other factors like décor.

- (3) **Service Marketing Triangle:** The service marketing triangle implies that all three sides that is, the company, the employees and the customer are critical to successful service marketing and management. Without one of the sides in place, the Triangle or the total marketing efforts cannot be supported. Each side represents significant challenges for most service businesses.

In the given figure at the bottom of the Triangle is what has been termed as interactive marketing or the real-time marketing, where the focus is on the skills of the employees in handling customer contact. Here, the actual service delivery takes place, and the firm's employees interact directly with customers. The customer judges the service quality, not only on the basis of the technical quality of the product-service package, but also by its functional quality. Hence, having a positive link between what is delivered through external marketing and what is

delivered through internal marketing is useless if promises cannot be kept. The right side of the Triangle shows the external marketing (setting promises). It is the normal activity of the firm to develop price, promotion and distribute the service offering to the customers. Anything that is communicated to customers before service delivery is seen as a part of external marketing. The left side of the Triangle shows the internal marketing (enabling the promise). The internal marketing activities of the firm are to train and motivate its employees to work as a team in order to deliver the service. It emphasises on the critical role that enables the employees to keep the promises made to the customer.



Listening to what customers and employee feel about performance against these factors:

- Evaluation
- Monitoring
- Motivation and
- Action
- Improving and building
- Introduce feedback on service

- i) **Core and supplementary products in the context of the case:** A service product refers to the benefit or performance that the customer buys from a service provider to satisfy a desire or want. What a customer purchases from the service provider is an experience.

For the marketer the core products are essentially all those products that define what kind of business they are in. For an example, Hotels and Resorts are in the hospitality business. The core products are indispensable to any business. The core product in the context of the case is car sales.

Supplementary products are the intangible elements, which include the contact with the service personnel, the ambience of the service environment, the mood of the customer, smiling employees, manager word of thanks, and readiness to go out of the way to serve.

In the context of the above case the service provider has failed miserably in providing the supplementary product. Mr. Krishnan the user of the service was heated as a stranger though he came with prior appointment.