

MBA- III semester, Specialisation- Marketing Management, Paper - Service Marketing, Paper code- MC 02, UNIT-II, TOPIC- PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF SERVICES.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF SERVICES

Cleanliness in a doctor's clinic, the exterior appearance and interior decor of a restaurant, the comfort of the seating arrangement in a cinema hall, adequate facility for personal needs at the airport all contribute towards the image of the

service (organisation) as perceived by the customer. The common element in these is that they all physical, tangible and controllable aspects of a service organisation. They constitute the physical evidence of the service. There may be two kinds of physical evidence:

- a) peripheral evidence
- b) essential evidence

Peripheral evidence is actually possessed as a part of the purchase of service but by itself is of no value. An airline ticket, a cheque book, or receipts for a confirmed reservation in a hotel are examples of peripheral evidence. A cheque book is of value only if you have money in the bank-without that is of no significance. Peripheral evidence adds on to the value of essential evidence.

In a hotel you **may** find a matchbox, writing pad, pen, complimentary flowers and drinks, which you may take away. These are representations of peripheral evidence. Such evidence must be designed keeping in mind the overall image which the organisation wishes to project and the reminder value of the evidence in its ability to remind the customer about the organisation.

Whereas peripheral evidence is possessed and taken away by the customer, the essential evidence cannot be possessed by the customer; the building, its size and design, interior layout and decor, logo and equipment's etc. are constituents of the essential evidence. The essential evidence is a very critical input in determining the atmosphere and environment of the service organisation. Contrast the essential evidence of a five-star hotel (its long driveway, grand entrance manned by a liveried doorman, sophisticated decor of lobby) with that of a fast-food outlet (with bright colours, loud music, and bright lights) and judge the kind of rich and formal atmosphere of the former with the relaxed and casual atmosphere of the latter. You can use physical evidence to build a strong association in the customers' mind and also to differentiate your service from the competition. As a marketing manager it is your responsibility to manage the physical evidence in order to create the ideal environment for your service. You can do this in two ways: one by making the service more tangible, and two, by making it easier for the customer to grasp the concept of the service.

One obvious way of making the service more tangible is by developing a tangible representation of the service as is done in the case of credit cards. Credit cards have a physical

entity and are identifiable by their brand name (American Express, Diners, Visa, BOB, i.e., Bank of Baroda) and distinct looks of the card. Other ways by which a service can 'be made more tangible is by standardising the physical attributes such as location, interior decor, colour scheme etc. Most airlines use a uniform for all their staff to help create a sense of identification. Similarly, Indian Airline's white and orange colour combination is well-recognised.

The second way is to make it easier for the consumer to understand the concept of the service which you are offering, with easily perceived objects and ideas. Promoters of package tours may provide detailed information about the hotel, food and transport facility they would be using to help the customers understand the concrete dimensions of the tour and thus reduce their anxiety arising out of uncertainty. Specific information about the various dimensions of the service should be provided to prospective customers. As a marketing manager you can help the customers to understand the service you are offering by stressing the organisation and customer relationship. Advertising agencies assign one account executive or a team to a particular client to help him identify with the agency.

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