

**MBA- III semester, Specialisation- Marketing Management, Paper - Service Marketing, Paper code- MC 02, unit II, TOPIC- PROMOTION OF SERVICES MARKETING.**

**PROMOTION**

It is now established that there are clear differences in information usages between goods and services. First, the difference is that consumers of services are less likely to purchase without information than those of buying goods.

Secondly, the consumer of services will prefer personal sources over impersonal sources of information. And thirdly, the basic characteristics of services have implications for communication strategy. For example, in hospitality industry the intangible service offer is tangibilized and represented in the promotional material and customers decide to buy or not to buy on the strengths of the descriptions and representations of the service offer in the promotional material.

Therefore, the above three differences influence the decisions with regard to with regard to

- (a) the communications objectives
- (b) target audiences and
- (c) planning of each of the sub elements of the promotion mix.

***Promotion Objectives***

Although there could be a variety of objectives to promote, but the basic objectives of the promotion mix for services may fall under one of the following:

1. Develop personal relations with client (personal relations might result in satisfaction, more than their service offer).
2. Make a strong impression of competency, honesty and sincerity (professional orientation to service transaction so as to win buyers confidence in sellers abilities to deliver the services).
3. Should be able to use indirect selling techniques (creating derived demand or act as a buying consultant).
4. Manage to maintain a fine image by positive word of mouth.
5. Packaging and customization.

***Target Audience***

While you are defining the objectives of your communication campaign, you should also be clear about the target audience. In service sectors there is a direct contact between the person who provides the service and the customers. Therefore, some amount of promotion should be targeted at the employees so as to motivate them to serve the customer better. In such communications the objective can also be to educate the employees about how to handle operational problems so as to increase their performance level. The other set of target audience are similar to that of goods where the target audience may not necessarily be the buyer or user but also the influencer, decider or user of the buying cycle.

### **Planning the Promotion Mix**

- i) **Advertising:** Advertising is any kind of paid, non-personal method of promoting by an identified organisation or individual. Certain services such as entertainment (cinema, theatre), passenger and freight transport (roadways, airlines, trains), hotel, tourism and travel, insurance have been advertising heavily in newspaper, magazines, radio, TV to promote greater usage and attract more customers. However, certain service professionals such as doctors, accountants, and lawyers, have rarely used advertising as a means of increasing their clientele. These groups have traditionally relied on word-of mouth for attracting new customers. But this situation is changing and you can see advertisements in the daily newspapers giving information about the location and timings that a particular doctor is available for consultation. These advertisements may also carry the message 'Honorary doctor to the President of India's or ex-director of a prestigious medical college or institution. Such messages help create a positive image and credibility.

The Guidelines which can be kept in mind while promoting services are as follows:

- a) use simple, clear messages;
- b) emphasise the benefits of service;
- c) promise only that which can be delivered and do not exaggerate claims;
- d) build on word-of-mouth communication by using testimony of actual consumers in advertisements; and
- e) provide tangible clues to services by using well-known personalities or objects to help customers identify the service.

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