



MODULE_4 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Lesson_3_AUGMENTED PRODUCT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Tourist product comprises a combination of all the elements, which a tourist consumes during his/her trip. Tourist product is total travel experience with multiple nature and consists of numerous components. Some of them are tangible and some intangible elements. Examples of individual elements are such as accommodation, transport, attractions and other facilities for tourists

Consumers often see product simply as the physical item that he or she buys. Nature of a product could be considered as three different products – the **CORE** product, the **ACTUAL** product, and finally the **AUGMENTED** product. This concept is known as the Three Levels of a Product. The core product brings the benefit to the customer. The actual product refers to the tangible object and relates to the physical quality and the design. The augmented product consists of the measures and things, which help the consumer put the actual product to use.

The guest's overall perception of service quality results from multiple experiences with the service provider. That occurs during the time product is consumed. Seven criteria of good perceived service quality contribute the study for the augmented product.

1. Theory and applied examples of three level of a product on tourism and hospitality industry

The first one of the levels of product, the core customer value, answers the question: What is the buyer really buying? That should be considered by marketer and producer of the product. In other words, what is the core problem? If you buy a car client is looking for solution to problema with transportation. For the traveller core value could be rest or shelter. The value and the benefit needed is accommodation. It could be just basic, low price accommodation or with special meaning for design eg. boutique hotel with glamour.

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The actual product is the tangible, physical product e.g. style, design, size and utensils for the room. Product features, eg. design, a quality level, and a brand name involves developing. Eg. boutique hotels should be intimate in scale, creating the ambiance of being a personal guest in a private home with individual touch. Often architecture creates a sense of uniqueness and identity in all aspects—aesthetics, planning, and functionality included.

The augmented product is the non-physical part of the product and consists of lots of added value. So when you buy a night you will get e.g. frequent client offers of free parking facilities Loyalty programs or any benefits add-on from the hotel prices that also can effort the guest first impression. etc. The use customer information could make it possible to offer frequent customer services, which she/he has used during previous stay. Beside that augmented value could be given by email, as an invitation to join VIP access to special events offered by hotel departments like restaurant or conference facilities.

2. Variety of experiences with the service provider over a period of time

The guest's overall perception of service quality results from a variety of experiences with the service provider. That occurs over the period of time when client uses services. Service providers have to look and know all the incoming stages during clients purchase process. They start eg. in hotel with the precede experience e.g. reservations. Client estimates how easy and reliable is the process of reservation. Next phase is on-site experience where client contacts the service environment. That is usually when client meets producers and operational tools eg. check-in and entering the room. On the follow experience client could meet with complaint resolutions. Beside that is could be frequent quest offers or notifications for frequent clients.

3. Seven criteria of good perceived service quality

The seven criteria of good perceived service quality area combination of seven components of service quality. Those criteria are: attitudes and behavior, accessibility and flexibility, reliability and trustworthiness and service recovery and servicescape, are linked to the functional dimension.

Those seven criteria of good perceived service quality could be divided under the three main components which are: Outcome-related criteria, process-related criteria and image-related criteria

Outcome-related criteria: Professionalism and skills belong to the technical dimension and reputation and credibility to the image.

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Process-related criteria: Attitudes and behavior of service employees (contact person) toward customers. Accessibility and flexibility of the service provider, its location, operating hours, employees and operational systems. Reliability means that the service company offers accurate and seamless service to customers' directly from the first time through the clients consuming process. Services provider does that in the promised time and trustworthiness. Service recovery means the immediate action taken by the service provider to solve and recover any service failure. Service provider should have power to take immediate action for service recovery with limited economic loss for the company. Aim is to prevent client leaving the company unsatisfied and in worst case spreading bad information.

Image-related criteria: Reputation and credibility means that the image of the service provider as a firm that can be trusted. The service should give adequate value for the money.

Conclusions

The total tourist product comprises a combination of all the elements, which a tourist consumes during his/her trip. Product could be studied or examined through three layers or levels. The **core** product is defined as the benefit that the product brings to the customer. The actual product refers to the **tangible** object and relates to the physical quality and the design. The **augmented** product consists of the measures taken to help the consumer put the actual product to use.

The guest's overall perception of service quality results from a variety of experiences with the service provider over a period of time. They start with the precede experience, followed by on-site experience and ended the follow experience.

Seven criteria of good perceived service quality could be divided under the three main components which are: Outcome-related criteria, process-related criteria and image-related criteria. Components of outcome-related criteria are professionalism and skills. Process-related criteria are attitudes and behavior of service, accessibility and flexibility, reliability, service recovery and servscape. Image-related criteria are reputation and credibility.

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