Lecture-19
Designing the Services Process-I

Hello! there. Welcome to this session on services marketing with a practical approach. My name is Dr. Biplab Datta and my contacts are given here, so that once you view in the slides once you go through this session you can send me a new feedback that you have and I will be happy to respond to them.

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Lesson 19   Designing the Service Process - I

Developing the Service Blueprint

So this is lesson number 19 which is designing the service process part 1 so we will look at developing the services blueprint.

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Service Blueprint

You will appreciate that we should design the service process properly so that our company can deliver superior quality services to its customers. The plan for delivering the services, called the service blueprint, must be drawn so that all parties clearly understand how a service is to be delivered to its customers.

While the service blueprint is a physical plan of the service process, we have to also understand the expectations of customers at various points during the process of service delivery.

You will recall, that our service would be considered to be of high quality only when it meets the expectations of our customers who purchase the service. A service blueprint gives an indication of the roles that employees, customers and collaborators have to play so that customers can get the benefit of service and its outcomes. These issues have been discussed in this les

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In 1984, G. Lynn Shostack coined the term service blueprint to mean a visual diagram of the service processes in terms of the step by step actions that the customer would be expected to follow in order to receive the service. The service blueprint of a restaurant is depicted in the figure later in this session.

We can see that each customer action will take place at a physical location which is part of the servicescape. It is important that each part of the servicescape gives the impression expected of the brand of the customer, as the customer would be observing these physical cues of the services.

For instance, a creaky door at the entrance would signify an ill maintained services outfit, and a soiled menu card would raise doubts in the minds of the customer about the level of hygiene maintained at the restaurant. On the other hand, a light, refreshing music can help to provide some comfort to a tired and hungry customer while he is waiting for the food to be served at a sit-in restaurant.

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Service Blueprint

The customer would be interacting with service personnel, who are called 'on-stage contact' as these contact employees would be visible to the customer while interacting with them and performing the service. You may note, that, on-stage contact personnel interact with the customer at several points in the 'line of interaction'. These points can be considered as pictorial representation of the 'moments of truth' – a term coined by Jan Carlzon in 1980 to signify the moments when service personnel interact and deliver a part of the service to the customer.

At each of these points, contact personnel must fulfil the needs of the customer and satisfy him/her. If they are unable to meet the needs of the customer at these points, the customer will be dissatisfied. However, the customer will be delighted if contact personnel are able to figure out the latent needs of the customer at these points and deliver a part of service that has not been expected by the customer.

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Just as customers would have interactions with service personnel they would similarly interact with elements in the servicescape, knowing or unknowingly. They must have a pleasant experience with these moments of truth too. That is why it is important to give enough attention to the design of the elements of the servicescape as these elements would in-turn determine the quality of experience that customers have at a particular servicescape.

Onstage contact personnel would receive support from back stage contact personnel, who would not be visible to customers. Yet they may serve the customer over phone, internet, etc. Hence backstage contact personnel are separated from the customers by a virtual line of visibility. Service personnel may be further supported by various support processes often driven by a computer. Often customers would interact with the front end of a support process like a computer touch screen for receiving information as part of their service.

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Blueprint of a Restaurant Service
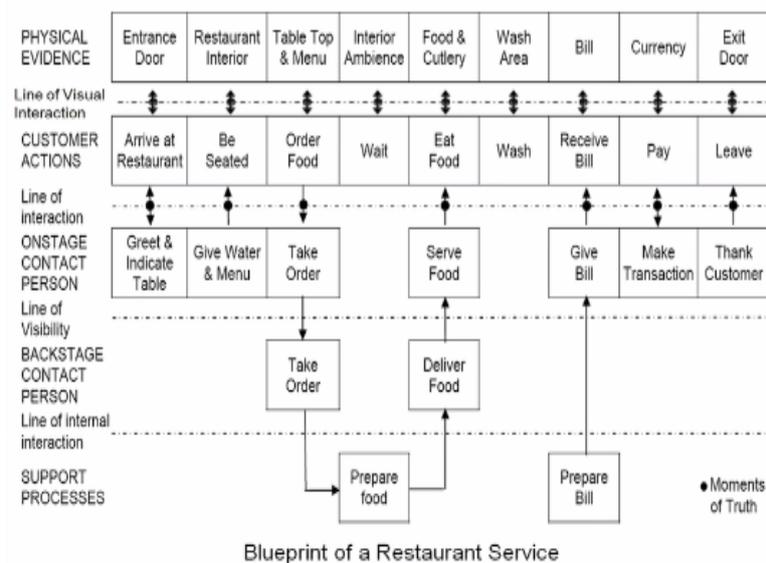
So this is what I was talking to you about a service blueprint. Here you see the blueprint of a restaurant service. So in this you see that the customer who is the king, so what are the customer actions. He arrives at the restaurant, he is seated at the restaurant, he orders food, he waits for the food, he eats the food, he washes, he receives bill, he pays, and he leaves. So these are these 8 functions that the customer does, 8 actions that the customer does.

Now these customer will actually for each of these actions the customer may be interacting with the onstage contact person from the service suppliers side. So the service supplier would dedicate somebody to greet the person who has arrived at the restaurant and indicate the table to him. Then he should give water and menu to the person by after he seated. Then he takes the order while the customer orders the food.

Having taken the order he crosses the line of visibility and gives the order to the backstage contact person. Then the support processes takes the order from the backstage contact personnel and prepares the food. Then this food is delivered across the line of internal interaction and across the line of visibility and the food is served. So here we have talked about 3 lines, one is the line of interaction between the customer and support personal or onstage contact person.

Then we have the line of visibility beyond which the nothing is visible to the customer. So he gives the order and the backstage contact person takes the order and then process the line of internal interaction to the cook who prepares the food. Then you see he waits and then he eats

the food which is serve to him, again there is a contact between the onstage contact person and the customer.

Then the customer washes and he receives the bill by the contact person, the contact person in turn receives the bill by the prepared bill support process, then he makes the customer pays and there is a transaction which is made with the help of the onstage contact person and the onstage contact person thanks the customer then the customer leaves the restaurant premises. Now when the customer arrives at the restaurant.

He looks at the entrance door, then later on he sees the restaurant interior, then he sees the table top and menu, he sees the interior ambience, the food and cutlery while eating the food. The wash area while washing, the bill itself after he receives it, the currency which is return to him once he pays and the exit door at the time of leaving. So we see that this is the line of visual interaction between the customer and the physical evidence okay or the parts of the environment.

So and then there is a line of interaction between the customer action and the onstage contact person. Now we see that this interaction between the customer and the contact person at the line of interaction there is a cross. Okay. So at this cross there is the black dot which is called the moments of truth. So at this moment of truth where the customer interacts with the service personnel, at this moments of truth the service personnel have to satisfy or even delight the customer.

So there are several such moments of truth where the customer at different points in time interacts with the services personnel. And at every moment of truth at the line of interaction there is a black dot which indicates that this is the moment of truth. So when the services provider serves the food and the customer eats the food there is again the moment of truth. So at this moments of truth there is the interaction between the customer and the service provider.

And these interactions had to be such that the customer is either satisfied or delighted by the manner in which the service provider provides the service to the customer. So these moments of truth are extremely important at the line of interaction. Because service is delivered as an

interaction between the customer and the service provider. Next we see the line of visual interaction.

Here the customer actually interacts with the elements in the physical evidence and he looks at those elements which are there as part of the physical evidence and also sometime interacts with them. For example customer goes for washing his or her hands and mouth he interacts with the wash area, he sees the wash area, if he sees her clean area is in place but he sees a dirty or fill the wash area then he is dissatisfied of the wash area.

So again you see that there is a interaction between the line of visual interaction and the interaction between the customer and the element in the physical evidence. So these points are also moments of truth which are the points of interaction between the customer and the physical evidence. So at each of these moments of truth the customer should be satisfied with the element of physical evidence that he is exposed to or he he might be delighted with the elements in the physical evidence with which he interacts.

Then of course we have the line of visibility beyond which the customer cannot see but this line of visibility at this line of visibility the onstage contact person interacts with the backstage contact person. Now when he is interacting with the interaction is happy interaction a pleasant interaction then the onstage contact person would also have a happy attitude would have a pleasant attitude with which he can serve the customer with line of interaction at the moment of truth.

Then we have the line of internal interaction between the support processes and the and the backstage contact person. So the support processes should also be very nice or well played out, so that the backstage contact person is happy about the support process. He may specifically he ask the backstage support process to prepare the food and he is happy to get the food from the support process.

And then he happily serves the food to the customer and finally satisfying the customer or delighting the customer at this moment of truth. So using this blueprint we can not only understand what kinds of steps the customer is going to take, what actions the customer is going to take. And we can also design the physical evidence such with which the customer comes in contact mostly visually but sometimes he also comes in contact with the bill, with

the currency, with the exit door, with the wash area, so these should be done immaculately. That means the physical evidence should be immaculate.

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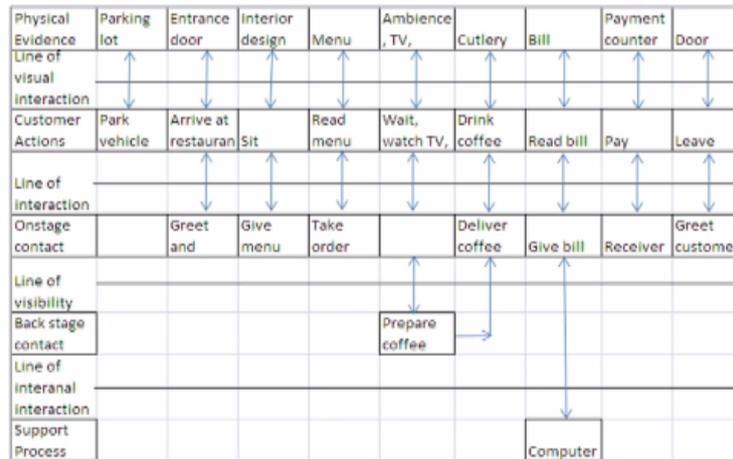
Service Blueprint of Coffee Cafe

Next we see another example of service blueprint at a coffee cafe. So here again we understand that the customer is the most important person in the premises and therefore the customer comes he parks the vehicle, he arrives at the restaurant, he sits, he reads menu, he waits and watches something like that. Again there is the line of interaction and at every cross section between the line of interaction and the interaction between the customer action.

And the onstage contact that is the moments of truth. So again you see here there are 8 moments of truth when the service provider has to interact and delight or satisfy the customer who has come. The customer again interacts with the physical evidence like the parking lot, the entrance door, the interior design, etc etc. Then he should be either satisfy or he should be surprise and delighted by the kind of physical evidence by the kind of ambience, by the elements of the physical evidence, which are there and he should be happy about it.

Then we also have the line of visibility, so the customer cannot see anything beyond the line of visibility and then there is the line of internal interaction and there is a support processes with which the bills are generated etc. So this is a service blueprint of a coffee cafe and using this service blueprint one understand what are important to the customer and what kind of interactions both with the onstage contact person and with the physical evidence should be there so that the customer is satisfied until I tell.

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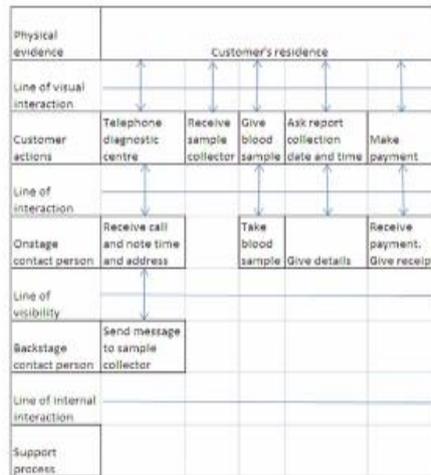
Service Blueprint for Blood Collection Service from Patient's Residence

Similarly we have a service blueprint for blood collection services from the patient's residence. Again the customer is the person who would provide blood for some kind of diagnoses, so he telephones the diagnostic center, he receives sample collector, he gives blood sample, he ask the report, collection date and time and he makes the payment. And there is the physical evidence which is the customer resident in this case and also the appearance of the onstage contact.

And then and these points of interactions are also important. Then there is a onstage contact person who receives the call and notes the time and address, he takes the blood sample, he gives details about the collection date and time and he receives the payment and gives the receipt about the payment. Then there is the line of visibility beyond which the customer cannot see and that is the backstage contact person who sends message to the sample collector.

And then there is the internal line of internal interaction and there are several support processes like particularly computers which are helping onstage contact person to serve the customer as well as possible. So these are the examples of the service blueprint which is not only used in the marketing arena but this can be also used for understanding the operations and to establish the operations of a particular facility like restaurant, or a patient's resident, etc.

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Once the blueprint of the service is ready, the service has to be developed further in terms of designing the moments of truth. For this, we would need to know the expectations of customers at each moment of truth. Moreover, the roles of various actors in the service delivery including the service provider and the consumer can be written out in detail in the form of a service script which employees and others must learn in order to be able to properly deliver the service to customers. This aspect has been discussed in the next lesson.

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