

Some of the important characteristics of services are as follows: 1. Perishability 2. Fluctuating Demand 3. Intangibility 4. Inseparability 5. Heterogeneity 6. Pricing of Services 7. Service quality is not statistically measurable.

1. Perishability:

Service is highly perishable and time element has great significance in service marketing. Service if not used in time is lost forever. Service cannot be stored.

2. Fluctuating Demand:

Service demand has a high degree of fluctuations. The changes in demand can be seasonal or by weeks, days or even hours. Most of the services have peak demand in peak hours, normal demand and low demand on off-period time.

3. Intangibility:

Unlike a product, service cannot be touched or sensed, tested or felt before it is availed. A service is an abstract phenomenon.

4. Inseparability:

Personal service cannot be separated from the individual and some personalised services are created and consumed simultaneously.

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For example, a hair cut is not possible without the presence of an individual. A doctor can only treat when his patient is present.

5. Heterogeneity:

The features of service by a provider cannot be uniform or standardised. A doctor can charge a much higher fee to a rich client and take much less from a poor patient.

6. Pricing of Services:

Pricing decisions about services are influenced by perishability, fluctuation in demand and inseparability. Quality of a service cannot be carefully standardised. Pricing of services is dependent on demand and competition where variable pricing may be used.

7. Service quality is not statistically measurable:

It is defined in terms of reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance, all of which are in the control of employees' direction interacting with customers. For service, customer satisfaction and delight are very important. Employees directly interacting with customers are to be very special and important. People include internal marketing, external marketing and interactive marketing.

Classification of services

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In order to be able to make a clear and relevant **classification of services**, we would first need to understand the concept of the word itself. Services usually refer to processes and not physical products. To understand more, read this article on difference between goods and services. Some services may include people whereas other services (like online services) may including objects which are managed by people.

Examples of services which include people can be a hair salon, education, theater, restaurants, public transportation. On the other hand services that include objects include repairs and maintenance, dry cleaning, banking, legal services, insurance, etc.

The service processes can be either manual or mechanized or both.

It is possible to carry out a **classification of services** based on two general dimensions such as what is being processed, whether is it a person or an object, and how is it being processed? In other words, what is the nature of the process (tangible or intangible actions).

In terms of the people processing activities, the level of involvement of the people can vary significantly. Managers must think about processes/outputs in terms of what happens to customers and what is being created. For pricing this category of services, the non-financial costs, time mental effort as well as fear and pain level must be identified.

Having your computer broken and taking it to a repair facility is one example of service included in this category. Customers' are less physically involved in this category of services and usually there is no real need for them to enter the service once he requested the service, explained the problem and pays the respective service.

Classification of services can be done on the basis of two points. These two points or factors, are further sub divided into 2 further variables. All in all, service classification considers four types of people or objects.