

SERVICE FAILURES & RECOVERY IN TOURISM SECTOR

DR.T.MEHARAJAN*

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies,(DDE),

Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai,

E-mail- meghfpm@yahoo.com,

Mobile no- 99944879794

&

A.B.SATISH RAO**

** Faculty – Food & Beverage Service,

International Institute of Hotel Management, Bangalore.

Abstract:

Although tourism organizations may have customer satisfaction as a major goal, not all tourism experiences are satisfactory from the customer perspective. Service failures can and do occur. Tourism may be particularly susceptible to the problem of service failures because of number of different service providers involved and that fact that it is an important and heavily people based service. If the service failures cannot be avoided then organizations must have clear strategies for responding to service failures and minimizing the adverse impact of customer complaints.

This paper assess the types and magnitude of service failures experienced by tourist guests and it evaluates the service recovery strategies used by travel and tourism to prove their effectiveness; and discover whether or not there were differences in attitudes and behavior of customers. Strategies that organization can use are to manage the outcomes of dissatisfying service experiences. This paper also aims to give insights into customers' perceptions and response regarding service failure and recovery and to try to draw a parallel between consumers in a developing economy like India.

To succeed, service businesses travels and tourism must offer their customer's high-quality and reliable service. However, many of the characteristics that make services unique also make it difficult to ensure consistently correct performance. To promptly identify and correct errors when they occur, service managers have been advised to include recovery steps in

their service processes. To fully understand and retain their customers, firms must understand what customers expect, when service failures occur, and should implement effective strategies for service recovery.

SERVICE FAILURES & RECOVERY IN TOURISM SECTOR

Introduction:

Services marketing is marketing based on relationship and value. Marketing a service-base business is different from marketing a product-base business. One of the most important basic principles in marketing is that organizational performance is enhanced by satisfying customers. Consequently, organisations involved in the delivery of tourism and tourism related services might reasonably be expected to have customer satisfaction is a key target. Many organizations guarantee to deliver 'Zero defects' service every time. Some service failures and customer dissatisfaction may be inevitable,

particularly in tourism. The tourism to service failure arises from three main sources. **First**, in most cases, delivery of the service relies on inputs from different parties' eg. airlines, hotels; tour operator's etc. which must be co-ordinated to deliver the tourist experience. The involvement of a number of different organization and the challenges of co-ordination can increase the potential for failure. **Second**, tourism is very much a people based service, heavy dependence on people to deliver service and the impact that other tourist may have experience of a particular individual can also increase the potential for service failure. **Third**, the tourism

experience may be heavily influenced by factors like overcrowding at visitors attraction, weather, vehicle problems etc will lead to a dissatisfying experience and may focus consumers attention on the negative rather than positive aspects of a tourism experience.

A poor service or a service failure will result in dissatisfaction that will create negative emotions & feelings like anger, discontent, disappointment, self-pity, anxiety, negative word of mouth and decisions not to repurchase etc. If it is impossible to avoid service failures and dissatisfaction, then it becomes increasingly important for organizations to understand how to manage such occurrences and minimizes their adverse effects. The service recovery will generate a range of positive customer responses with compliant handling as a key element. Responding effectively to consumers complaints can have a significant impact on satisfaction; repurchase intentions and the spread of word of mouth. Many customers are very passive about their dissatisfaction

simply customers will take actions and decide whether to stay with that provider or switch to a competitor. However, it is essential to understand the way in which consumers react to service failure and how they respond to different approaches to service recovery. In this context we have discussed an overview of existing service failure, service recovery and compliant handling of tourism. It is very clear that excellent service recovery is a really a combination of a variety of strategies starting with the basic “do it right the first time”. In order to sustain in business it is important to have satisfied customers. Satisfied customers are more likely to return as well as recommended the product to others. On the other hand dissatisfied customers are more likely to engage in behaviours that negatively impact upon a business and react to show negative emotions.

Why does service fails?

The tourism industry offers a range of services including accommodations, food and beverages, transport and tours and attractions. Many organizations aim

for 'Zero defects' service, particularly in tourism. Planes may be late, staff may be rude or inattentive and maintenance of the tangibles surrounding the service may not always be perfect. A Service failure arises when customer faces dissatisfaction because the service was not delivered as originally planned or expected. In effect the service failure occurs, then, service failure arises from customer perception of a service experience and not from what the organization believes it has provided. Successful service provisions require a matching of expectations and behaviour but it is very difficult task to achieve under time pressure and inter-customer variability. Many researchers have adopted recovery strategies to understand consumer reactions. These types of service that a customer may experience are many and varied among them are

Service delivery failures – Types

The delivery system failures consist of three types are of :

- a) **Unavailable service** - Unavailable services refers to services normally available that are lacking or absent such as cancelled flight or hotel that is overbooked.
- b) **Unreasonably slow service** – it relates to services or employees that customers perceive as being extraordinarily slow in fulfilling their function and delays in serving a meal in a restaurant or lengthy queues at visitor attraction.
- c) **Other core service failure** - the core services offered by different tourism industries are, like food service, cleanliness of aircraft and baggage handling etc.

Failure to Respond to Customer Needs and Requests

The second type of service failure relates to employee responses to individual customers needs and special requests. We can classify the customers needs into explicit and implicit. Implicit needs are requested, eg. if an airline

customer becomes ill and faints his need is apparent. The airline fail to meet out implicit need of customer by not providing connections flight. Explicit request are overtly requested, they are of

Four types

- a) special needs
- b) customer preferences,
- c) customer error and
- d) disruptive others. Responses to special needs involve complying with requests based on a customers special medical, dietary, psychological, languages or social circumstances. Responses to customer preferences require the employee to modify the service delivery system in some way that meets the preferred needs of the customer (eg. when customer request for typical menu at a restaurant). Customer error involves a scenario in which the failure is initiated by a customer mistake (eg. lost tickets or lost hotel key) and employee need to respond.

Responses to service failures

When a customer experiences a service failure ie the service fails to match expectations and the consumers are dissatisfied. Understanding this process is important from an organisational perspective. Service recovery can be initiated to solve the problems occur due to service failure and customer complaints are probably one of the most effective ways of collecting such information. Unfortunately, many customers do not complain following service failure, but they do engage in activities such as negative word of mouth and brand switching. Thus many organisations may miss out an opportunity to undertake service recovery because they do not know that a failure has occurred.

Customers respond to a service failure in number of ways researchers have identified that compliant behaviour from the perspective of the goals being sought. Among them four categories of responses were identified in many

service industries like
banks, hotels, tourism, financial
institutions etc. They are

❖ **Passives** - This group of customer least bothered to take actions and they unlikely to say anything to the provider and comply to third party. They often doubt the effectiveness of complying, thinking the consequences will not merit the time and effort. Sometimes their personal values and norms argue against complying.

❖ **Voicers** - These type of customers actively comply to the service provider, but they are less likely to spread negative word of mouth, or to switch patronage or to go to third party with their compliants. These customers viewed as the service providers as best friends and also believe complying has social benefits and therefore they don't hesitate to voice their opinions.

❖ **Irates** - these consumers are more likely to engage in negative

word of mouth to friends and relatives and to switch providers than are others. They are in average propensity to comply to the provider. They unlikely to comply to third party. They give less chance to service provider and instead will switch to a competitor.

❖ **Activists** - These consumers are characterized by above average propensity to comply on all dimensions. They will comply to the provider, they tell others and they are more likely than any other group to comply to third parties. They are very optimistic sense of the potential positive consequences of all types of complying. Sometime these type of consumers act like '**Terrorist**' in complying about the service providers.

Switching Vs Staying - Service Recovery

Service recovery is concerned with the process of addressing service failures

more specifically service recovery can be thought of as being concerned with the productive handling of complaints and includes all actions taken by service provider in order to try to resolve the problem a customer has with their organisation. It is necessary that complaints are necessary to institute a recovery effort. Without recovery any tourist firm may be unaware that problem exists and unable to appease unhappy customers

Service Recovery Strategies

Mainly Tourist and Travel service providers are poorly at Service Recovery so customers are disappointed. To overcome this problem they adopted strategies as benchmark they start with Quotes “**Do it right First time**”.

Fail safe your service - Do it right the first time!

The first rule of service quality is to do it right the first time. In this way recovery is unnecessary, customers get what they expect and costs of redoing the service and compensating for errors

can be avoided. The service strategy is employed to achieve ‘reliability’. It is important to create a culture of Zero defections to ensure doing it right the first time. This how employees and managers aim to satisfy every customers and look for many ways to improve service.

Welcome and Encourage complaints

Even in Zero defection organization aims for 100 percent service quality, failures occur. To avoid tourist companies adopt a critical component of a service recovery strategy is to welcome and encourage complaints. Complaints should be properly anticipated, encouraged and tracked in time. The complaining customer should truly view as a friend. To facilitate the customer work, many companies use latest technologies like toll free number call centre, email, and pagers to track complaints as early as possible.

Act quickly

Complaining customers want quick responses. Many tourist companies

encourages and welcomes the systems & procedures that allow quick action to empower employees. Another obvious way to speed compliant handling is to call customers rather than sending mail. Sometimes employees themselves anticipate problems before they arise and surprise customers with a solution. To give quick service to employees they provide a specific and real need for recovery training. Eg. FedEx use this type of package to solve their own service needs through technological spotlight like online service.

Treat customers fairly

Customers expect to be treated fairly in terms of the outcome they receive, the process by which the service recovery takes place and their interpersonal treatment they receive is an important strategy they remind for effective service recovery. Without complaints a firm may be unaware that problems exist and unable to appease unhappy customers.

Learn from recovery experiences

By tracking service recovery efforts and solutions managers can often learn about systematic problems in their delivery system that need for fixing. Through conducting root – cause analysis firms can identify the sources of problems and how to modify and sometime to eliminate completely the need for recovery.

Learn from Lost customers

Another effective service recovery strategy is to learn from the customers who defect or decide to leave. Many research has been undergone by experts to identify the reason why customers leave the company? No one really likes to examine their failures yet this is essential for preventing the same mistakes and losing more customers in the future. It can be overcome by depth interview or by research. Senior people in the company particularly, business –to-business contexts where customers are large and the impact of even one lost customer is great.

Return to Do it Right

When a company leads its activities directly back to the beginning : **“Fail safe the service and do it right the first time”**. If companies integrate all this types of strategies they find less service recovery. Yet, when those situations occur, they will be prepared to impress the customers and keep their business safe.

It was found that one kind of actions can restore the customer to a satisfied state whereas an enhanced set of actions delight the customers. Fast response and correction are fundamental to all strategies though customers experiencing the double deviation strategy to deal the problem quickly without service recovery.

Conclusions

The nature of Tourism services is such that few organisation can hope to offer ‘Zero Defects’ service. If some service failure is inevitable the process of responding to those failures is potentially of considerable significance

in relation to consumers future evaluations of an organisation.

Once an organisation is aware of a service failure a clear service recovery strategy is essential in order to minimise the negative effects of the initial failure and maximise the positive outcomes from the recovery process. By designing proper service approach tourist companies can increase customer satisfaction, increase loyalty, repurchase and positive word of mouth. Increasingly, many have strated to employ the concept of perceived justice suggesting that customers satisfaction with compliant handling and service recovery will be higher when customers are convinced.

References

- [1] Managing services Marketing :Text readings – Beatson J.E.G. and HoffMan.
- [2] VP Magnini et al., [“The service recovery paradox: justifiable theory or](#)

smoldering myth?," Journal
of Services Marketing 21, no.
3 (2007): 213-225.

- [3] CA de Matos, JL Henrique,
und C Alberto Vargas Rossi,
"Service Recovery Paradox:
A Meta-Analysis," Journal of
Service Research 10, no. 1
(2007): 60.

- [4] Christo Ananth, Vivek.T,
Selvakumar.S., Sakthi
Kannan.S., Sankara
Narayanan.D, "Impulse
Noise Removal using
Improved Particle Swarm
Optimization", International
Journal of Advanced
Research in Electronics and
Communication Engineering
(IJARECE), Volume 3, Issue
4, April 2014, pp 366-370

- [5] Vandermerwe, S. and Rada, J.
(1988) "Servitization of
business: Adding value by
adding services"