

5.1.15: Gap 4- Service Delivery vs. External Communications

Learning Objectives

- Outline how a retailer can close the service delivery and communications gap

Gap between service delivery and external communication: Consumer expectations are highly influenced by statements made by company representatives and advertisements. The gap arises when these assumed expectations are not fulfilled at the time of delivery of the service. For example – a hospital printed on its brochure may have clean and furnished rooms but in reality, it may be poorly maintained – in this case, the patient’s expectations are not met.

The fourth gap in the model is the communication gap, reflecting the difference between the level of service promised and what is received. Consumer expectations are shaped by a range of communications including promotional advertising, website copy and photographs and statements made by company representatives. This gap is commonly due to over-promising or, at the extreme, false advertising (i.e., bait and switch). The classic “under promise and over deliver” advice is a way to avoid this gap. For perspective on this point, read marketing guru Tom Peter’s [Under Promise, Over Deliver](#) rant. Key takeaway: Quality, responsiveness and price are all important elements. What’s most important, however, is keeping your word. That will keep customers satisfied, and ensure that you keep your customers.

Specific actions to close this gap:

- Review communications across all touch-points, including digital (email, website, social media and partner sites), print, and on-premise materials, to ensure accuracy and consistency
- Implement a “reality check” review and approval process for new campaigns and updates.
- Conduct mock customer interactions and listen in and provide coaching on point-of-contact conversations to ensure services are being represented realistically
- Incorporate employee input and customer reviews to make advertising real. Similarly, incorporating actual employees and customers in advertising puts a real face on the business.

practice questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/9322>

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