

“JUKEBOX SERVICES”[®]: A TYPOLOGY FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICE

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Abstract

“Jukebox services”^{®*}, is a new **typology*** related to the **provision*** of services. It is an attempt to define and describe accurately and sharply an attitude which can be met at service.

This typology defines the “fake” servicing diathesis which is demonstrated by some service providers who provide proper service only when they are getting paid or they are getting a tip. “Jukebox service”[®] refers to the situation when a service representative does not provide what the Services Marketing science describes as a proper service but, whose sole drive in servicing is to receive money from his customer rather than satisfying him. Thus, this service is considered fake because it is not customer oriented.

“Jukebox services”[®] can be met in many industries, even to public sector services.

Keywords: Services, “Jukebox Services”[®], typology

Introduction:

Being many years in the adult training profession and lifelong learning with the duty of tutoring employees who provide services, I have come to the conclusion that smart, short, representative expressions can deliver the “message” straightforward, thus making concepts related to their profession easily understood. Such a training approach can bring result to the daily job of trainees. The “do’s” and “do not’s” belongs to old times of tutoring.

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This humoristic “vintage” phrase “Jukebox service”[®] forms a service typology. It describes the instant and instinct behavior of a service provider according to which he/she is polite- sometimes overly polite- when the payment of the services is taking place or is due. After payment has been effected, the provider becomes inconsiderate, indifferent and unconcerned. In the “Jukebox services”[®] the service provider does not follow the rules instructed by the Services Marketing Science, where the 3 P’s are: People, Physical evidence and Process. The “Jukebox services”[®] typology refers to the P of People.

The Jukebox[®] phenomenon occurs before the provision of service, or during the provision with the hypothesis of payment or a tip, which the provider seeks for.

*A Jukebox is a partially automated music-playing device, usually a coin-operated machine that will play a patron's selection from self-contained media. The classic Jukebox has buttons with letters and numbers on them that, when entered in combination, are used to play a specific selection.*¹

In the same pattern the music-playing device is the service provider, the coin-operated and played music is the service provided, and the patron is the customer.

In the contemporary societies the service experience should exceed customer’s expectation and the given promises. “Promising exactly what will ultimately be delivered would seem a logical and appropriate way to manage customers expectations and ensure that

reality fits the promises”.² In the “Jukebox services”[®] case service provider often exceeds reality by promising intentionally more than she/he will deliver to the customer.

“Jukebox services”[®] can be met at gas stations, mini markets, bakeries, fast food restaurants, street commerce, hotels, restaurants, cafes, pharmacies, gyms, beauty salons, delivery, housekeeper and building services, where the employee is very polite only when the payment is taking place, or a tip is given. Also at postal, telephone and insurance services and to public sector services in underdeveloped countries.

The “Jukebox service”[®] typology, which is developed in this article, will be paralleled with certain Services Marketing concepts, such as: the “placebo services” typology, the “emotional bank account” consideration, the value offered to the customer, the life time value concept, the service dimensions typology, the ethical environment, the e-commerce reality, the neuromarketing approach and the first impressions theory.

The typology of “placebo services” is a close consideration of services with the one analyzed here. “Placebo services” are defined as:

*A placebo is a preparation containing no medicine given to humor a patient or for a psychological effect. Placebo in Latin means “I will please”. Placebo service, likewise, is an imitation of the real thing. To an unsuspecting customer, placebo service seems like the real thing, until your placebo is inevitably exposed. Placebo service does not work.*³

At “Jukebox services”[®] the provider shows empathy and nice attitude only when paid. In the “placebo services” nonsensical services are provided, the provider becomes a “liar” in the eyes of the customer by being careless. At the “Jukebox service”[®] one meets a faker with the only incentive of payment, with no provision of promised services.

It is important to mention that customers have an “emotional bank account”. This means that customers use their sentimental world every time they have a contact with a service provider. In the “Jukebox services”[®] the deficit is given. According to Stephen Covey:

*The theory is that we make withdrawals from other people’s emotional bank accounts and look to have deposits made into our emotional bank accounts. The reverse is true too. We don’t like to have withdrawals taken from our emotional bank accounts and often it can take some effort to put deposits into the emotional bank accounts of others. As with any bank account, the more deposits you make, the healthier the account*⁴

Customers nowadays are seeking for emotional bonds with service providers, a contrary belief to the “Jukebox services”[®]. One can easily feel the contrast by comparing the concept of being a “star” with the customer and providing “Jukebox services”[®]

*Customers remember when service providers go out of their way to help them, when they refuse to give up until a persistent problem is solved, when they throw out the “rulebook” if that is what’s necessary... Although extra-effort service is by definition hard to work, it also is more fun to provide. And why shouldn’t it be? Being a star with the customer is fun.*⁵

Today’s customer pay a price and buy a value. At “Jukebox services”[®] the value does not exist.

*Price is part of value but not its equivalent. To customers, value is the benefits received for the burdens experienced; it is what customers receive in exchange for what they must endure to receive it... Price is price, value is the total experience.*⁶

Because in the “Jukebox services”[®] value is “0”, the price of the service falls down, also. On the other hand the life time value of a customer, in “Jukebox services”[®] is usually low, since the customer will never come back, at least by his choice.

The life time or relationship value of a customer is influenced by the length of an average “lifetime”, the average revenues generated per relevant time period over the lifetime, sales of additional products and services over time, referrals generated by the customer over time, and costs associated with serving the customer. Lifetime value sometimes refers to

*lifetime revenue stream only; but most often when costs are considered, lifetime value truly means “lifetime profitability”.*⁷

Among the five service dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles), none is provided to the “Jukebox services” case. *These are:*

Reliability: ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness: willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Assurance: employees’ knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

Empathy: caring, individualized attention given to customers

*Tangibles: appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and written materials.*⁸

None of above exists in the “Jukebox service”[®] attitude. One of the basic aims of service provision is to build trust among customer and service provider. Ethical behavior is the basis upon the trust is built. In “Jukebox services”[®] trust is absent.

*The term “ethical/unethical” refers to an individual’s subjective moral judgment of right/wrong or good/bad. Company behavior is perceived as unethical if it violates moral norms and values or generates undesirable outcomes*⁹

Moral norms make necessary for the services to be ethical in order the customer to trust the service provider. Even at the e- commerce world services should be virtuous, truthful and frank from the first to the last moment.

*From a moral viewpoint, ethical behavior should not exist because of economic pragmatism, governmental edict, or contemporary fashionability- it should exist because it is morally appropriate and right. From an economic point of view, ethical behavior should exist because it just makes good business sense to be ethical and operate in a manner that demonstrates trustworthiness... In the e- commerce world we’ removed beyond brands and trademarks to “trustmarks.”*¹⁰

It is obvious that there is no possibility of building trust when the “Jukebox services”[®] phenomenon occurs. When the only aim is the payment the relationship goes away. According to neuromarketing fairness is important to the whole contact among customer and service provider. Fairness is by definition vanished when “Jukebox service”[®] occurs.

*When customers think they are being treated unfairly, a small area called the anterior insula becomes active. The brain’s response is similar to that of smelling a skunk. Such a powerful, negative, and primitive reaction easily overwhelms the deliberation of the more logical prefrontal cortex region. Under these conditions, the perceptions of exchange fairness by a service consumer probably take on even larger role than first imagined. If unfairness is perceived, it is very difficult to re-establish the relationship as the brain has neural wiring from its early formative period that protects from it from known dangers – just as it continues to repeat “safe” behaviors.*¹¹

In the “Jukebox services”[®] from the first to the last moment service provider aims to persuade the customer to buy and pay, in a hurry, so that everything will be done quickly and spontaneously. The first moments of the provision of service are very important. The customer makes his/her first impressions.

*It is believed that first impressions are decisive and established or disprove relationship within the first four minutes of the intercourse (Chung-Herrera, Beth G. and Gonzalez, Gabriel R. and Hoffman, K. Douglas (2010), “When demographic differences exist: an analysis of service failure and recovery among diverse participants”*¹²

In the internet, one can meet a very polite seller until the time he is paid, after which the service can become inexistent. The customer is beguiled by the service provider.

Usually low paid employees or employees who are used to get a tip fall into this category. Also, the phenomenon can be met in more “serious” services, as in the public

sector, where the provider is used to serve only when tip or commission is given. There exists also “Jukebox services”[®] corporate behavior, which occurs when a company is promising prompt service when the customer is about to pay and then, when the customer’s need arises, the same company sends her/him to an outsourcing telephone center. Where there is economical booming there is possibility for companies and service providers to provide “Jukebox service”[®], since customers have surplus income. When economic recession arises, then those will be the first to face diminished sales and losing their customer base.

It remains to be seen if “Jukebox services”[®] concern less civilized societies as far as the level of services is concerned, as well as less trained people, who work on service.

The “Jukebox services”[®] contradict to the added value, to the life time value, to business ethics, as well as, to the many concepts of the customer care, which is an ongoing process with every customer, new or old, with the aim of building relationship with him/her.

Customer nowadays can recognize “Jukebox service”[®] attitude, where no preparation or after sales service exist, neither attention to customer needs and personality. It can be recognized by the body language and the words which are used. Sometimes the service provider resembles a machine which reproduces words by using stilted language – *langue de bois*- (like the Phonograph, the forerunner of jukebox). One can compare through the “Jukebox service”[®] typology the services given by a machine – check in, bank ATM, telephone automatic system- with the real service where human characteristics involve into the provision of service. If the human being behaves like a machine, where money is the input and mechanical service is the output, then the human being is vulnerable to machine and robotics service. Nowadays, one can meet people in the streets, or in shops who follow the “Jukebox service”[®] approach. Sometimes over politeness can be characterized as “Jukebox behavior”[®]. In touristic areas the phenomenon is met at cafes and restaurants in which are hanged low aesthetics photographs of the products they serve, at souvenir shops where the one close to the other are selling the same product, all with employees out of the shop “fishing” tourists walking by. Today’s experienced tourists can easily recognize the phenomenon, so they either not enter, or they seek very cheap prices, making a cycle in which everything is cheap: prices, value, service, attitude, aesthetics.

Additionally, this attitude, damages the society’s opinion about service providers since customers become suspicious about services in general, especially in the same sector. In a broader social context the “Jukebox services”[®] starts like a “I win-you lose” situation, with the service provider being the winner, but arrives at a “I lose–you lose” situation.

“Jukebox behavior”[®] describes the customer as well, since service provision and delivery is an interactive process. “Jukebox customer”[®] is polite when she/ he receives exceed services and over-demands from the provider due to the fact that he pays. But he does not participate properly when is needed, so the service outcome becomes poor.

Examples of “Jukebox services”[®] are:

- At the gas station where the employee smiles and takes care of customer’s car (check for oil and tires, cleaning windows) only when he receives a tip.
- At a fast food where the cashier smiles and tries to cross-sell until the completion of the order. Then she/ he becomes inconsiderate for the customer.
- At a restaurant or coffee shop, where the waiter is polite and gives more attention only to those customers who give a tip.
- At a hotel, when a groom leads the customer to her/his room and looks at his hands for a tip.
- At a hotel where the receptionist is “busy” when speaking to the customer while talking to the phone and looking at the computer at the same time. Sometimes the mobile is ringing! Only when payment is to be done, he says a warm thank you.

- At touristic destinations where there is someone inviting customers to enter the premises and then no one gives the promised – at the street- attention and service.
- At a hairdresser salon where the girl who shampoos the customer is looking after the tip.
- At beauty centers where the customer is pampered until he buys the treatment and then the service become indifferent.
- At a local pharmacy where the pharmacist and employees are polite when customer buys and they do not giving consultation to the customer, if needed.
- At local mini-markets where politeness is given only for sales purposes.
- At the street commerce where illegal commerce takes place one meets usually “Jukebox service” providers.
- At a gym, where the customer pays for a time period and personnel is polite at the day of payment, and then they become inconsiderate to the customer’s needs.
- A postman who brings mail/ parcels to the door of the customer who gives a tip.
- In delivery services where the delivery boy smiles and says a warm thank you only and when a tip is given, and not for the customer’s preference to his company by ordering the received menu.
- Building services (plumbers, house painters, restorers), where the polite behavior changes after the agreement has been made.
- At housekeeping services, the service provider is helpful, happy and caring only when he is paid. If payment is delayed, the service provider might become irate. Also often the employee “invents” needs for the owner of the house, not for the purpose of making the house cleaner, but in order to earn more money.
- At insurance companies services where the insurer is polite, giving and caring only and when the customer is to buy a new contract. At the case of a need the same insurer may disappear.
- At a telephone service when the service provider talks like a robot. i.e: “Good morning, my name is....., how can I serve you?”, with a voice which sounds like a machine rather than a human being.
- A public sector employee who gives attention to affairs for which he has been paid for. In public hospitals a surgeon may pay attention to patients who offered an “envelope” with an amount of black (mainly to underdeveloped countries).
- Usually foreigners who work at another country, when copying cultural elements of politeness and apply them to their business, they become extraordinarily polite without any reason, thus giving “Jukebox services”.

Conclusion:

The playing list being the level of the services provided, the coin being the “tip”, the “Jukebox services”[®] provider delivers poor service to the modern, well traveled, experienced customer. Especially in the “experiential” era in services, according to which the customer deserves “experience”, the “Jukebox attitude”[®] is a wrong one, with the serious result of the non returning customers.

It remains to be seen how culture affects the attitude of providing “Jukebox services”[®].

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