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SELLING SERVICES: WHAT'S NOT THERE

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INTRODUCTION

Selling services—intangibles that cannot be touched or physically owned—presents distinct problems and opportunities in today's rapidly changing business environment. Unlike actual things, services depend on performance, expertise, and trust, making them more complex to evaluate before purchasing. This concept of "selling what's not there" necessitates the use of unique techniques, such as stressing the benefits, setting clear expectations, and developing strong customer relationships. Thus, understanding the subtleties of service marketing is critical for effectively communicating value and building loyalty in a service-oriented market.

INSIGHTS ON SELLING SERVICES

Selling services presents distinct difficulties from selling products, where buyers can inspect, feel, and try prior to purchasing. Since services involve the sale of intangible offerings, strategic decisions are essential. When there is no tangible product to display, the emphasis switches to establishing credibility, proving value, and ensuring prospective customers make the right decision. Accordingly, this article delves into key insights on selling services that are invisible but necessary for a deal to be completed. To succeed in selling services, it is critical to employ strategic techniques that improve credibility, demonstrate value, and successfully address consumer demands.

Firstly, social media usage has become an essential tool for businesses in selling services, particularly by offering platforms for direct and efficient communication between sellers and potential customers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media became even more crucial. It allowed businesses to maintain real-time consumer interaction, facilitating immediate purchase decisions (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). This immediacy is particularly significant for younger consumers, such as millennials, who are more likely to purchase a service on the same day they engage with a brand on social media (Kay et al., 2020). In addition, Trequattrini et al. (2022) highlighted the pivotal role of digital technologies in enhancing the management and marketing of intangibles. This suggests that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital analytics can reduce uncertainty and improve value perception. This is also supported by Etuk et al. (2022), who stated that online marketing strategies significantly impact adoption by efficiently utilising digital platforms to connect with potential customers, helping services expand their reach.

Next, the focus is on enhancing customer experience. According to Wetzels et al. (2023), customer experience drives profitability by centring on understanding customer needs, delivering consistent and high-quality service, and leveraging feedback for improvement. Thus, these practices foster satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, creating a cycle where happier customers lead to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth, ultimately boosting financial outcomes. In addition, customer-centric techniques have been demonstrated to greatly increase brand loyalty and retention. Hence, providing high-quality customer experience has taken centre stage in service marketing strategies (Homburg et al., 2017). According to another research, customer experience management favours perceived service value, particularly in industries where the line between services and products is becoming hazier, such as financial services and e-commerce (Grewal et al., 2017). Correspondingly, businesses can increase client loyalty and gain a long-term edge in service markets by emphasising emotional involvement and customised experiences.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, selling services requires a distinct approach that emphasises building trust, demonstrating value, and leveraging digital platforms to connect with customers. The convergence of social media, influencers, and modern technology such as AI has altered service marketing, allowing organisations to increase consumer engagement and create brand loyalty. Therefore, companies may bridge the value communication gap and connect meaningfully with their audiences by concentrating on individualised experiences and exploiting intangible traits such as emotional appeal and perceived quality. Nevertheless, a customer-centric strategy, supported by innovative tools and methodologies, is critical for success in the competitive landscape of service marketing.

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