

This is a sample of the instructor resources for *Achieving Service Excellence: Strategies for Healthcare* by Myron Fottler, Robert Ford, and Cherrill Heaton. This sample contains the instructor notes for Chapter 2.

The complete instructor resources consist of instructor notes for all 15 chapters. If you adopt this text you will be given access to complete materials. To obtain access, e-mail your request to [hapl@ache.org](mailto:hapl@ache.org) and include the following information in your message:

- Book title
- Your name and institution name
- Title of the course for which the book was adopted and season course is taught
- Course level (graduate, undergraduate, or continuing education) and expected enrollment
- The use of the text (primary, supplemental, or recommended reading)
- A contact name and phone number/e-mail address we can use to verify your employment as an instructor

You will receive an e-mail containing access information after we have verified your instructor status. Thank you for your interest in this text and the accompanying instructor resources.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Customer as Guest

#### **Textbook Discussion Questions**

1. What is guestology and why is it important in healthcare facilities?

Guestology is the scientific discovery of customers' demographic characteristics, needs, wants, expectations, and actual behavior it forces management to systematically examine their service experience from the customer's point of view while also meeting financial and clinical objectives. The goal is to meet and exceed patient expectations of the total service experience including the service product, setting, and system for service delivery. This goal is accomplished by aligning the strategy, staffing, and systems with the interests of the patients and their key drivers of customer satisfaction.

Guestology focuses the organization on the patient so their needs and expectations are exceeded. As a result, the organization can compete more effectively. Positive organizational outcomes associated with guestology include intention to refer others to the facility, intention to return to the facility, increase market share, patient compliance, lower levels of litigation, and positive financial outcomes. These outcomes are more likely if the organization builds a long term positive relationship with the customer.

2. Discuss each of the three components of the total service experience?

The three components are the service product, service setting, and the service delivery system. The product consists of both tangible and intangible components. In some cases, the only product is intangible. The setting is the servicescape or healthscape which is the physical environment in which the service product is provided. The delivery system includes the staff, physical production tools, and organizations processes. All of the above needs to be managed from the customer's perspective.

3. What are the components of "value" from the customer perspective? How can a healthcare organization enhance such value?

Value is determined by the customer who considers clinical quality, service quality, and customer cost. Any management policy which enhanced clinical or service quality and/ or reduced customer cost in terms of their time, out of pocket cost, pain and suffering, etc. will enhance customer value.

4. What options do healthcare organizations have if they wish to enhance "value" to their customers?

5. They could figure out ways to enhance the clinical quality of their services and patient safety. They could also enhance service quality and customer satisfaction through better service management practices. Finally, they could lower out of pocket cost to the customers they serve through various incentive programs (i.e., rewards for entering a hospital during periods of low utilization). Service management could be enhanced by developing managerial initiatives to enhance the organizations service strategy, staffing, and systems which address customer key drivers and service expectations.

## **Case Study**

Spring Haven Hospital has utilized Gallup survey data of patient satisfaction for many years. They receive a quarterly report which shows patient satisfaction with various service attributes by department as well as changed overtime. The CEO, Mr. Howard Jones, has called a meeting of the executive team to discuss the utility of these data, how they have been used, and how they might be enhanced through the use of other information.

The data indicate the hospital is now at the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile for short term general community hospitals in the U.S. in terms of their overall patient satisfaction. Results have varied from quarter to quarter and year to year, but there have been no significant changes in either direction over the years. Such data have been collected yet the mission statement of the hospital gives lip service to excellent customer service. Mr. Jones is questioning the value of the Gallup data because it does not seem to change much nor does it provide useful information for enhancing patient satisfaction. Even if a particular attribute did show a significant decline or low absolute level of patient satisfaction, the data does not provide guidance as to the nature, causes, and possible solutions to the identified service weakness. Finally Mr. Jones raised the issue of whether the service attributes measured in the Gallup survey were key drivers of customer satisfaction at Spring Haven. No one could answer this question.

## **Case Questions**

1. What other customer service data could be developed to replace or supplement the Gallup survey?

Since the key drivers to customer satisfaction at Spring Haven are not currently known, this would be an obvious starting point. The service attributes included in the Gallup survey may or may not reflect what Spring Haven's customers value (i.e. their key drivers of satisfaction). These key drivers effect their expectations and evaluation of the services they receive at the hospital.

At a minimum, the hospital could consider running focus groups for patients which ask patients to indicate which service attributes are most important to them and why. For example, they could be asked to rank the service attributes provided in the Gallup survey, additional service attributes identified by the management team or employees, and service attributes identified through a pilot survey or focus group with patients. Then they could be asked to evaluate the hospital's success in meeting their expectations for those service groups ranked most highly (i.e. their key drivers of satisfactions). A similar process could also be used to identify the key drivers for other internal customers (i.e. physicians and staff) or external customers (i.e. third party payers or public officials). In this way the management team would have data from a wide variety of internal and external customers. Such data could be used to achieve service excellence for all customers.

Some research indicates that physicians and staff often know the customer service strengths and weaknesses of an organization. Consequently, another approach is to survey or use focus groups of internal customers (physicians and staff) to identify the organization's strengths and weaknesses in serving external customers. These internal customers could also be asked to propose strategies for addressing each of the service weaknesses they identify.