

The single most aggravating service experience I had this semester was with Whoop. They make a fitness-based tracker that measures how hard you work out and how well you recover. It is a subscription service, however usually on a yearly plan. As someone who works out and tracks performance daily, I have relied heavily on my Whoop. Due to this, as well as the price, I expected the product to be reliable and customer service to be responsive and have solutions for their product.

The trouble started when my device suddenly refused to sync with my app on my phone. This was a total dealbreaker because the entire value of a Whoop is to actually see your data and insights on screen. I reached out to their support team multiple times over a few weeks and tried every single troubleshooting tip they threw at me. But no matter how many times I followed their instructions, nothing worked. Every time I hopped back on a chat, it felt like I was starting from zero, explaining the whole saga to a new person who didn't seem to have any record of what I had already tried. Eventually I had to exchange the device, and throughout the whole month-long headache, nobody once apologized for the hassle or offered any kind of credit. What started as a simple tech glitch turned into a really sour experience with the service as a whole.

From a service marketing perspective, this failure can be explained by Provider Gap 3, the service performance gap. This gap occurs when the service delivered to the customer does not meet the standards and promises by the company. Whoop markets itself as a high performing, reliable, fitness tracking service. However, in this situation Whoop failed to deliver on the promises of the organization. More importantly, the issue was not only a device malfunction, but also the service's inability to effectively resolve the issue at hand. Firms must not only make promises to customers but also enable and keep those promises through proper systems and employee support. In this situation, Whoop failed to do so.

Another issue was the lack of customer-defined service standards. Customer-defined service standards focus on what customers expect in a service experience, rather than what the company prioritizes internally. From my perspective, the most important expectations were clear. I wanted clear communication, a plan to fix the issue, and a timely resolution. Unfortunately, none of my expectations

were met. I was given no clear timeline, no updates, and no clear process to escalate the issue after repeated failed fixes. This to me suggest that Whoop may rely more on their internal processes than designing and implementing a proper service around customer expectations.

The experience also highlighted a failure in the service blueprint and process design. Service blueprinting is used to map out n entire service process; including customer interactions, frontstage employee actions, and backstage support systems. If Whoop had a well-designed service blueprint, the support process would have included clearly defined escalation points and coordination between customer support and technical teams. The process felt very repetitive and disconnected. I was given similar troubleshooting steps multiple times which led to no real progress. The overall inability to resolve the issue directly impacted my perception of the entire company.

Lastly, there was a clear breakdown in the role of employees as boundary spanners. Boundary spanners are responsible for connecting customers to their company as well as communicating internally. The priority of many boundary spanners is ensuring issues are resolved effectively. In this incident, Whoop support did not take ownership of the issue. It seemed to me that they were more so following a script than being problem solvers. They repeated the same suggestions multiple times even though it was not a viable solution. In many cases, boundary spanners are seen as the service to customers, their inability to resolve the issue certainly changed my perception of the organization.

To improve the service, Whoop should focus on three key actions. First, the company needs to implement some sort of escalation system in their service process. After a few failed troubleshooting attempts, the issue should be escalated to a higher support team. This would hel customers feel more heard and understood within the support process. Creating this system would help more difficult issues like mine get resolved in a faster time frame.

I also think Whoop should establish clear customer-defined service standards. For example, the company could implement specific benchmarks. Some examples could be resolving issues on a tighter timeline,

providing regular status updates, and making sure that customers are informed of the next steps in all stages of the process. These standards should be measurable, such as response time, and qualitative elements, like good communication and customer satisfaction.

Third, the company should invest more heavily in internal systems and employee support. This includes implementing a centralized CRM system so that all customer interactions and previous troubleshooting steps are easily accessible for frontline employees at Whoop. In addition, employees should be trained well and take accountability of all customer issues. This would look much better to customers rather than following scripts. Giving employees the authority to offer compensation or alternative solutions, when necessary, would improve the service recovery as well.

Overall, this incident demonstrated that the biggest issue was not the initial product failure; it was the fact that Whoop couldn't recover at any point further down in the process. By improving service design, creating better customer-focused standards, and better supporting employees, Whoop could greatly improve service quality and customer satisfaction.

The best service experience I had this semester was at Miller's Ale House. I visited with my friend Josh, and as soon as we walked in, the environment was very inviting, organized, and efficient. We were greeted quickly by the host, who then seated us in a timely manner. He also created some small talk with us, which I thought was a very nice introduction to the restaurant. We were then immediately attended by our server, which overall gave us a pretty strong first impression of both the restaurant and the service.

Throughout the service encounter, the staff demonstrated a high level of attentiveness. Our server came to check on us multiple times, making sure we had everything we needed. My water was consistently refilled quickly, which really reflected the awareness our server had of our needs. Additionally, when I ordered my fajita meal, the food runners communicated to me that the plate was hot, showing attention to detail in the situation with concern for my safety. When my friend requested sauces for his meal, they

were brought out quickly without hesitation. The food itself arrived in a respectable timeframe, reinforcing the efficiency of the service process.

From a service marketing perspective, this experience reflected a number of ways that the organization is successful. Three important actions taken by management stood out to me, including: strong employee management and service culture, consistent use of customer-defined service standards, and effective design of the servicescape.

The most notable factor contributing to our positive experience was certainly the employees. According to the service market theory, frontline employees play a critical role in the success of the service because they are often seen as the service from the customer's point of view. This was highly evident during my visit to Miller's Ale House, as the employees directly shaped my positive experience. The staff demonstrated key characteristics of a strong service culture, to the point that delivering quality service seemed natural. Their attentiveness, friendliness, and overall ability to anticipate the needs of their customers suggest that management has properly trained and motivated its staff.

Additionally, this portrayed effective alignment with the service marketing triangle. Specifically, when it comes to terms such as enabling and keeping promises. Management appears to have equipped their employees with the skills and support necessary to deliver the expectations of the brand. As a result, employees provide high-quality service, reducing variability and increasing customer satisfaction.

Another key reason for the success of this service experience is the organization's use of clearly defined customer standards. These are the standards that customers value, rather than the organization internally.

In this case, the service reflected both hard and soft standards. Hard standards are measurable and demonstrated through quick service, timely food delivery, and prompt actions to customer requests. For example, our food and sauces arrived in a quick manner and were a clear signal of operational efficiency.

Soft standards are more perception-based and were also strongly present in the service process. The friendliness of the staff, their willingness to help, and the overall welcoming environment contributed to a

very positive experience. These soft elements are critical in shaping customer's perceptions of Miller's Ale House service process, even if they are not easily measured.

By focusing on both types of standards, Miller's Ale House ensures that they meet all expectations of their customers. The alignment they have between customer expectations and actual performance results in a higher perceived level of service quality.

The third important factor contributing to the overall positive experience is the servicescape, which is the physical environment in which the service takes place. The physical environment plays a key role in shaping how customers think, and I know it affected me in a very positive way.

At Miller's Ale House, the environment was very clean, organized, and well-structured, which contributed to a comfortable and enjoyable experience for both my friend and myself. Elements such as the layout, seating arrangement, and overall atmosphere made it very easy to navigate the restaurant and gave an overall relaxed feeling.

According to the stimulus organism response framework, the physical environment influences customer's internal responses, which then affect the customer's behavior. In this case, the environment created comfort and satisfaction, which enhanced my perception of the service.

Additionally, the servicescape supported the service process by enabling employees to perform efficiently. For example, the quick delivery of food and responsiveness of the staff suggest that the overall flow and design of Miller's Ale House are designed effectively for both customers and employees.

Overall, my experience at Miller's Ale House demonstrates how high-quality service is achieved through the alignment of multiple factors. The organization's focus on strong employee performance, customer centered service standards, and an effective physical environment creates a consistent and enjoyable customer experience.

Unlike poor service experiences, I have been a part of where breakdowns can occur between expectations and delivery. This experience showed alignment among all employees and each step of the service process. Management successfully created a system where employees are properly supported, customer needs are prioritized, and the service environment enhances the customer experience.

As a result, Miller's Ale house gave me a high level of customer satisfaction, encouraged me to return, and helped me have an improved reputation of the company in my head.

After thinking about bad service experiences, I realized good service is not just one thing. It's about everything that works together. Small details make a difference when they match what customers expect.

One thing I learned is that companies must understand their customers. Many businesses think they know what customers want. There's a difference between guessing and making services around those needs. This connects to customer-defined standards. Companies should focus on what customers value than internal goals. In my experience, simple actions like refills, quick service, and clear communication matched what customers expect.

Another thing I learned is that employees are crucial in delivering services. Frontline employees are often seen as the service. Their behavior affects how customers think of the organization. In my experience the employees were attentive, responsive, and professional. This shows that companies should invest in their employees.

The environment of a service also affects how customers feel. The layout, neatness, and atmosphere impact customers. In my experience with Miller's Ale House, the environment was organized and comfortable. This made my visit much better.

I also realized that organizations must recognize and adapt to challenges in service delivery. Service firms face changes in demand. If not managed properly, this leads to wait times and decreased

service quality. Companies that balance demand and capacity maintain service during busy periods. They should implement strategies like staffing or queue management systems.

Finally, innovation helps service firms stay competitive. Effective innovation focuses on customers and the entire service experience. Businesses can innovate by improving processes, redesigning, customer roles, or enhancing the experience through technology and communication. Even small improvements in speed, convenience, or communication enhance customer satisfaction.

Overall, these experiences show that achieving service requires a focus on the customer, good employee performance, and well-designed service systems. Organizations that align these elements deliver high-quality service, build customer loyalty, and stay competitive.