



How Contemporary Scholarship Addresses Service Management Practices

Robert C. Ford and David Solnet

1 Introduction

As this chapter is written, Coronavirus has created consequential changes in the global economy, with major elements of the service sector heavily impacted. While we anticipate the changes this pandemic has caused will lessen in their impact as the world's population becomes vaccinated, some changes will inevitably become permanent in the “new normal”. The writing of this chapter, consequently, is even more speculative than we originally anticipated as contemporary scholarship has generally followed a path of researching existing services to extrapolate findings to describe how customers respond in an increasingly globalized world of trade and travel. To the extent that this path has become disrupted as a dominant predictor of excellent service management practices and behaviors, this chapter aims to weave together contemporary scholarship with informed speculation as to what service management practices will be in a post-COVID world.

R. C. Ford (✉)

Department of Management, College of Business Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL, USA

e-mail: rford@bus.ucf.edu

D. Solnet

University of Queensland Business School, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

e-mail: David.solnet@uq.edu.au

While we could identify several dozen topic areas to focus on, given the limited space we have to present our thinking, we have chosen four that we think merit the most attention in a Handbook used by future scholars and practitioners. These four are (1) humanizing the service experience; (2) contingent (gig) work and workers; (3) further evolution from customer service to customer experience; and (4) managing diverse customer resources in the co-production of a service experience.

The chapter is divided into four sections in which we (a) identify a significant service issue and its importance to managers and (b) present a summary of contemporary scholarship related to this issue that can help inform future practice. Table 1 offers a brief overview of each topic, the core concepts, and insights from researchers.

2 Humanizing the Service Experience

What Is the Topic and Why Is it Important to Managers?

Consider this scenario. A customer enters a hotel and finds no front-desk agents to greet him or her, no concierge to provide information on local destinations, and no full-service restaurant. Instead, there are self-check-in terminals and signage directing guests to smartphone apps to check-in or access whatever information or service is needed during the stay. This is not the future—it is now! This technology currently exists and is being accelerated by the adoption of robots on the frontline (Wirtz et al., 2018), creating a real dilemma for service organizations seeking the optimal balance between meeting customers' expectations for human touch with their desire for speed, price, and efficiency offered by technology (Solnet et al., 2019). This topic explores the role of human touch as a vital component of value creation in service organizations and presents a sampling of scholarly work on finding the optimum balance between tech and touch.

Technology-driven changes to the service process are shifting the balance of responsibility from employees to customers and are rapidly becoming the norm in many industries. By substituting standardized technology for differential human touch is creating high levels of commoditization through digitization (Bolton et al., 2014). This movement away from human-generated service or “touch” is particularly stark in the realm of hospitality and related sectors relying on person-to-person interactions. Where well-trained and guest focused human interaction was once regarded as a source of competitive

Table 1 Summary of topics

Topic	Key concepts	Clues from scholars
Humanizing the service experience	Customers' expectations of human touch in service experiences	The study of hospitableness and its impact on customers
	Finding the best balance between tech and touch to meet customer expectations	Authenticity and emotional connection
	Contexts create complexity	Changing role of service employees
Contingent work and workers	Growing segment of the workforce	Social exchange theory
	Emerging challenges to workers and employers	Investment strategies
	Recognizing and responding to the different needs of different types of contingent workers	Emerging work ecosystems
		Recruitment/inducements
Evolution from customer service to customer experience	Management theory historically based on product orientation	Inclusivity/culture to integrate contingent workers with full-time worker teams
	Growth of the experience economy requires rethinking the definition of a "product"	How to transform to be fully customer centered
	Social media/ease of sharing good or bad stories creates profound and immediate word of mouth	Merging physical, digital, and social realms
		Customer journey mapping
Managing diverse customer resources in the co-production of a service experience	Managerial challenges of co-producing customers	Emotions and critical touchpoints
	Firms must design the role of the quasi employee customer as part in their service offering	Expanding co-production and value co-creation opportunities in experience design
		How to understand and utilize customer's resources and capabilities
		Training and motivating customers to successfully co-produce

advantage, technology solutions are rapidly eroding the roles of front-desk staff, airline check-in agents, service advisors, and many other frontline service roles. These changes are being viewed as mutually beneficial for both the organization (a strategy to reduce labor costs and human errors) and customers (by improving the efficiency of service delivery, reducing wait times and prices). This trend was accelerated by the COVID-19 imperative to physically

separate customer-facing service personnel from customers and is likely to continue expanding significantly to change customer expectations in their service experience.

What Are Some Key Contributions from Scholarship?

While decreased human interaction in service may increase efficiency and lower costs, it may come at the expense of customer needs for social contact, warmth, and authenticity that can differentiate a service within a highly competitive environment. The trade-off between technology and human-driven service delivery has been effectively captured in several recent models (Bowen, 2016; Mody et al., 2019; Solnet et al., 2019). In general, these models point at the importance of both “touch” and “tech” in enhancing customer experiences, with each complementing or substituting for the other depending upon the simplicity/richness of the service-interface, customer expectations for interaction versus efficiency, organizational strategy or value-propositions, and human resource management (HRM) principles and practices aligned with the aims of balancing the trade-off of a simple economic transaction versus building long-term customer relationships with an organization’s employees.

For over two decades, researchers (e.g., Brotherton, 1999; King, 1995) have been noting the importance of the *human exchange* in a service experience and how it translates into the sense of caring and building strong human relationships in providing hospitable behavior by customers or what is now termed “hospitableness”. Defining hospitableness has led to research on how customers perceive this in a service interaction. Studies have been done on the importance of authentic smiles (Grandey et al., 2005), authentic caring behavior straight from the heart (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012) as well as identifying specific behavioral aspects of what it means for employees to display hospitableness in the service experience. These include cultural sensitivity and non-discriminatory behavior (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ford & Heaton, 2001; Teng, 2011), nuances of verbal tone (Guerrier & Adib, 2000), warmth and courtesy (King, 1995), attentiveness and politeness (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), offering the generous feelings of friendship (Lashley, 2007), and employee authenticity (Yagil & Medler-Liraz, 2013).

Several researchers have sought to capture the concept by proposing measures of hospitableness. For example, Pijls et al.’s (2017) “Experience of Hospitality Scale” includes three factors that measure the customer’s perception of the degree of hospitality provided by a service organization: inviting

(open, inviting, freedom), care (servitude, empathy, and acknowledgment), and comfort (feeling at ease, relaxed, and comfortable). Solnet et al. (2019) developed a model to define four distinct service configurations describing the different ways technology and people can interact to create the human touch that co-creates value for guests and service organizations. Their model proposes a 2 X 2 with two axes—a customer's preference for *how the service is delivered* (i.e., human touch vs. technology)—and the type of organizational structure and strategy a firm might have (i.e., price and transaction vs. a relational orientation). This model and various other proposed configurations can help organizations' leaders and researchers to better understand how, when, and how much the human element should be included in the service experience versus technology.

Addressing the workforce changes in a world driven by technology and automation, Bowen (2016) proposed four changing roles for service employees, essentially arguing that service employees remain vital but that their roles will change as technology changes service delivery processes. Bowen's proposed new or enhanced roles for customer-facing service employees are "Innovators"; "Differentiators"; "Enablers"; and/or "Coordinators". Service employees are "innovators" because machines are still generally unable to do many tasks innately human (creative writing, interpreting readings, and exhibiting emotions). Service employees can be "differentiators" (and reduce commoditization of service) when their human interactions create "nonsubstitutable points of differentiation" (Bowen, 2016, p. 9). Employees can be "enablers" when their tasks include sensing customer difficulties in co-producing their service experiences and then intervening to help customers have the experience they expect and avoid or correct a service failure. Finally, employees can be a "coordinator" when someone needs to synchronize or organize the elements of complex service ecosystems by listening and responding to a customer who needs help in figuring out the best resolution for a co-production dilemma or a service delivery problem. While all of these roles may include technology, employees are still required to add the human touch as technology is not yet able to accommodate the unique variations in customer wants and behavior caused by the unique variations in individual customers. Until the technology evolves an employee must fill those gaps or risk the negative outcomes from a dissatisfied customer. Ultimately, technology is still unable to fully replace human workers, especially in contexts which are highly dependent on what only humans can offer—the human touch in the form of hospitable behaviors. Other researchers have entered the conversation about changing roles of service employees in a technology context. For example, Wunderlich et al. (2012), assessed user perceptions of smart technologies

through smart interactive services (microchips, sensors, wearables) and highlighted the importance of the “service counterpart” (employee) in implementing technology solutions. Their work employed expert panels to assess likely trends, concluding that service organizations can benefit by emphasizing interpersonal and social aspects of the service experience by using human interactions to raise a social presence and enhance human trust.

Technology as a substitute or augments of the human touch in service will only continue to increase. The key question we seek to highlight in this chapter is how organizations determine the degree and intensity of human touch that meets their customers’ expectation in the design of the service experience and to allocate co-producing tasks and resources accordingly. By better understanding the ways humans connect with each other, when and where customers expect that connection, the changing nature of the service employees’ co-production tasks and responsibilities, and the competitive advantage that can be obtained through hospitable service, managers can identify ways to balance their customers’ expectation for human touch with the advantages offered by the substitution of technology to capture that human touch derived competitive advantage in a growing market of technology-driven standardization.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused adaptations to customer expectations of human touch are likely to impact this balance into the future as customers have become accustomed to the increased substitution of technology for touch in the roles they play in co-producing their experiences. Customers have become accustomed to touchless transactions, the separation of employees behind plastic barriers, and curbside delivery. We predict that these new patterns of co-production will have a lasting impact on the types of human interactions customers expect and will speed up the substitution of technology for human touch. It is not so far-fetched to think of how a robot with emotional display capabilities will redefine the definition and delivery of hospitableness.

3 Contingent Work and Workers

What Is the Topic and Why Is it Important to Managers?

Contingent workers can be found in a variety of employment relationships and represent people with a wide variety of motivations for accepting part-time or contingent work (Feldman & Doeringhaus, 1992). Connelly and

Gallagher (2004) define four categories of contingent workers by their organizational relationship. These are agency (those who work for an organization that provides workers to temporary jobs), direct hires (those who are hired for temporary work), contract (those who work under contract for a defined time), and seasonal (those who work for short periods of time). Since these four may not be mutually exclusive we instead categorize contingent workers on the basis of their reasons to be contingent. Thus, we suggest defining contingent workers into those that “must”, “may”, or “can” work on a contingent basis and review these further below with some implications for managers relevant to each. Those who “must” include those who have no other choice generally include two types of workers. The first includes those who perform low-skill jobs for which training cost and time are nominal (e.g., retail clerks and fast-food workers). Workers who do these jobs are generally young, unskilled, inexperienced, and otherwise unemployable but who are willing to trade low wages and temporary work for the opportunity to gain some income, training, and experience that will qualify them to enter into the world of work. The second type of “must” contingent workers are those who are looking for a permanent job because they must have income and seek contingent work until they find it (Bosmans et al., 2016).

The second category of contingent workers are those who “may” work but do not have an imperative to do so. These may include older, experienced, and often skilled people who choose to trade free time, usually in retirement, for the personal satisfaction (fun) of doing something with their time, the opportunity for having social interactions, and, frequently, extra income. Unpaid volunteers also fall into this category as does the high school student whose parents (or they themselves) think a job (like a grocery bagger or seasonal field hand) would be a good way to use their time for development and extra money.

The workers who are categorized into the “can” group are those who generally are in such high demand that they can forego permanent employment and are able to choose where, when, and on what they work. These include professionals and non-agency consultants who are ready, willing, and able to affiliate with an organization for a defined period of time to do a specific assignment that fits their expertise, on their own terms. Often web designers, IT professionals, accountants, trainers, consultants on specific topic areas, or other professionals who are in demand can elect to sell their services as contingent employees.

Organizations need to understand the motives behind their contingent employees to ensure they offer the array of inducements sought by the non-permanent part of their organization. Unless employing organizations offer the kinds of inducements contingent workers value, they risk failing to attract

the number and quality of contingent employees required to deliver the quality service customers expect. Moreover, unless employing organizations also take the time and effort to integrate these contingent workers into the organization's culture, their ability to effectively collaborate and cooperate in any team efforts to represent the values defined by the service mission alongside permanent employees will be diminished.

What Are Some Key Contributions from Scholarship?

Companies need contingent employees for several reasons including accessing specific talents and skills, reducing costs incurred when hiring permanent employees (Boudreau et al., 2015; Cascio & Boudreau, 2015), and flexible staffing (e.g., staffing for temporary surges in demand). However, in contrast to the extensive literature on managing permanent employees, there is limited research on attracting, assimilating, motivating, and rewarding contingent workers and especially in regard to their varying motives for employment as contingent workers. We do point to two recent publications on this topic that provide insights into worker motivation (Subramony & Groth, n.d.; Subramony et al., 2018).

In regard to the first category of contingent workers, those that must work as contingent employees, there is little research from which to draw conclusions. While some study has been done on employing young, unskilled, inexperienced, and first time employees, the extent to which researchers have identified the best ways to manage, motivate, and reward these workers is limited (e.g., Jaworski et al., 2018). The general assumption by management, with rare exceptions, seems to be that these workers will not be around long enough to recover any money spent on job design, training, or career development. However, some organizations might offer prospective employees contingent work to evaluate fit before making a long-term commitment that would be harder to sever than it is for a part-time employee (Dahling et al., 2013). Likewise, the second group, those who “may” work on a contingent basis, has also not received much in the way of research investigations (e.g., Gascoigne & Kelliher, 2018). Generally, most assume that for those who may be enticed to apply their Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSAs) to an organization for a limited time, the willingness to work will be some combination of economic and psychic income that the employing organization must discover.

Research on the third category of those who “can” choose to work as contingent workers, especially as professionals, is more extensive than the first two groupings. This literature has identified rewards and incentives that are

not only attractive for all employees but may be especially important for contingent professionals who are in such high demand that they can choose when, where, and on what to work. These include offering programs that enable talent mobility (Collings, 2014), work-life balance (Deery, 2008), onboarding and supervisory support (Kuvaas et al., 2014; Selden & Sowa, 2015), participating in talent pools (Seopa et al., 2015; Swailes & Blackburn, 2016) and the availability to participate in a learning culture (Kontoghiorghes, 2015). Herbert (2016), as an example, argues that organizations should enable contingent workers to explore work opportunities in different divisions or locations as an inducement to both join and stay by offering them opportunities to learn new capabilities. A related inducement that appears to be critical to retaining skilled contingent professionals is personalizing the conditions of employment (Deery & Jago, 2015; Dizaho et al., 2017). Providing breaks for childcare, stipends for carpoolers, choice of work laptop are a few examples of desirable inducements for both permanent and contingent professionals. The level of supervisor support for the contingent worker is very important in establishing a meaningful connection with the organization (Gentry et al., 2007).

Finally, as is also true for permanent employees, contingent workers seek to work in challenging jobs with talented workers as peers (Wilkin, 2013). Radford and Chapman (2015) found in their study that an organized and thoughtful onboarding process when supplemented by continuing supervisory support for career growth and development added to recognition for job accomplishments of contingent workers enhances their retention. Other strategies include creating talent pools that lead to a feeling of exclusivity by the contingent workers (Swailes & Blackburn, 2016) and giving contingent workers opportunities to learn and improve their skills (Schlechter et al., 2015).

Contingent professionals expect a higher quality of life resulting from the autonomy to decide how to do the job, freedom to choose their assignments and to work virtually from any location, and the flexibility to schedule their working hours and pace (King and Zaino, 2015). These findings support earlier findings that identified that inducements like training and development opportunities, competitive salary, and a supportive organizational environment are essential as part of a management strategy for contingent professionals (Wilkin, 2013). More recently, in a summary of his research study's findings Shabiyi (2019) suggests that the best inducements to offer contingent professionals to work for client-organizations are rewards with an emphasis on compensation and benefits, a recognition of work-life balance policies to allow autonomy and job flexibility, and organizational support for personal and career development.

Bringing contingent workers into a team of permanent employees does have challenges for the organization and its managers. The biggest downside for managers is to find ways to include the contingent professional in the organization's culture as much as possible. In many situations the full-time employees will be somewhat antagonistic to or jealous of the typically higher paid and less restrained "hired gun slingers" who bring extra talent and capacity to the workplace (Ashford et al., 2007; George & Chattopadhyay, 2017). Thus, managing contingent employees requires a greater sensitivity to concerns of both full-time and contingent employees and how they view each other. This downside can be especially challenging when the contingent workers are customer facing as these service delivery workers are the face of the organization to customers and unless extra effort is made to integrate these contingent employees into the service culture, there will be potential for a customer experience that fails to meet service standards. Getting buy in to the organization's brand promise by those who are not permanent representatives of the brand is a significant managerial challenge.

4 From Customer Service to Customer Experience

What Is the Topic and Why Is it Important to Managers?

In the late part of the twentieth century, writers argued that we had entered the next phase of economic evolution, termed the experience economy (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). In the experience economy rather than buying a birthday cake from the local bakery or making a cake at home using premixed ingredients, consumers now sought a full "birthday experience" at either a restaurant or a "fun creation" business (a fun park, themed restaurant, even at a McDonald's private room and playground). Thinking of providing customers with experiences means that nearly everything, in degrees, offered as a service should be viewed through an experiential lens by companies and organizations seeking to satisfy an ever greater level of customer expectations of an experience in their service transactions. To satisfy the growing expectations of increasingly informed customers requires radical thinking about and new understanding of how value is co-created.

In the experience economy, value is created through memories co-created during the full range of interactions across a customer's experience journey. Readers of this handbook will be familiar with the dozens of exemplar

organizations who have prospered through their successful management of the customer experience. Ikea has transformed the idea of buying furniture into an experience, Apple's intuitive operation has created an experience that transformed the concept of a phone and generated nearly irrational loyalty by its users, Amazon's ease of online shopping and intelligent use of customer data transformed the retail business model, and Nespresso created a cult for home coffee drinking with its unique design and marketing strategy. While there are recurring debates about whether these firms have adopted an entirely new approach to their business model or rather just an advancement on earlier ideas such as overcoming Levitt's "marketing myopia" (Levitt, 1975) where he claimed that too many firms were guilty of looking inward at their products, rather than outward at their customer needs, there has been an unarguable explosion of academic and industry literature on radically new managerial practices necessary to put their customers' experiences and their end-to-end journey at the center of all decisions.

We predict experiences are likely to be even more important to the next generations of consumers, who will be less interested in "owning and collecting things" but more interested in investing in satisfying and memorable intangible experiences—such as live performances, travel, river rafting, sport, theater, educational opportunities—things which create meaning (and a selfie photo opportunity) and memories. While the continuing rise in disposable income across the world is an important driver of this change in customer expectations (what do you buy when you have all the "things" you want?), social media has accelerated it. People value posting or documenting their emotion-driven memories of joyful experiences when they share their accomplishments, mastery of learning or discovering, and something new about themselves or their world with friends. The move to offer or add "experiences" as the service product can be attributed to fundamental changes in how customers view transactions with organizations:

1. Customers no longer view a product or service as a free standing "thing" but as some integrated part of their ongoing life experiences.
2. As disposable income levels increase across the world, the next generation of consumers will expand their search for satisfaction beyond functional uses of their purchases to experiences that yield emotional connections.
3. Technology will continue to lower the barriers of time, capability, and cost between organization and customers—and between customer and customers—all of whom can communicate in "real time" as they co-produce experiences

4. The more “touchpoints” between an organization and its customers in the customer journey, the more opportunities to expand differentiating the service experience by focusing on unique resources to create competitive advantage.

Therefore, organizations must recast their view of the experience they offer to their customers, and the implications for every part of the organization, and realize that they create value from a comprehensive view of how customers think, feel, and act through an extended set of interactions, each of which can be of critical importance.

What Are Some Key Contributions from Scholarship?

Customer centricity—easy to say, hard to do. Customer centricity is a total organizational approach that focuses on the needs, wants, and resources of customers as the starting point of all organizational activities (Lamberti, 2013). Drucker (1954) predicted (correctly) that the balance of power in business would evolve from suppliers and manufacturers to the customer, driven by exponentially greater access of information and direct communications to consumers. Unfortunately, proclaiming customer-centered practices and actually doing so are two very different concepts, with continued research findings showing that few firms practice genuine customer centricity and those that do benefit from it (Inversini et al., 2020; Solnet & Kandampully, 2008). Shah and colleagues (Shah et al., 2006) developed a most instructive set of barriers to customer-centered practices as well as a set of pathways to overcome these barriers. These barriers include changing organizational culture so that leadership behaviors convey choices about how to spend time and other scarce resources (e.g., spending time with customers rather than reviewing financial reports); changing organizational structure to ensure that organizing by old style “product categories” does not prevent effective cross-department customer-centered collaborations; and changes in performance metrics to ensure that customer-centered elements are measured, rewarded, and given the right importance over more traditional metrics driven by financial returns and cost efficiencies. Perhaps the most extensive efforts to develop customer-centric organizations can be seen in the hospitality literature where Disney’s “Guestology” is frequently mentioned as the basis for managing this exemplar of a customer-centric organization (Ford & Sturman, 2020). The implementation of customer centricity is often linked to the employee’s belief and participation in an organization’s culture and the

hospitality literature offers strategies and practices that lead to customer-centric cultures (e.g., Ford et al., 2008).

Complexity and managerial implications of the customer experience approach. Customer experience has been conceptualized as a “multidimensional construct focusing on a customer’s cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm’s offerings during the customer’s entire purchase journey” (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 71). Most definitions emphasize the importance of a customer’s experience taking place across many points of contact and interactions, with growing explanations and complexities added to this relatively older field of study and practice. For example, Bolton et al. (2014) proposed specific challenges and even contrasts in their discussion of a customer journey by integrating digital, physical, and social realms that can lead to opposing strategic options that organizations must reconcile in order to assess customer journeys in different contexts and different conditions. Their research introduces growing technology-enabled services such as automated intelligence, automated social presence, and social robots in developing new thinking about customer experience. Customer experience reaches far beyond only marketing concerns. Homburg et al. (2015) emphasized firm-wide managerial implications of customer experience and the vital need to change culture, mindsets, strategic directions and innovations within firm capabilities.

Mapping the customer journey. Initially conceptualized from a marketing and operations perspective “blueprinting” (Shostack, 1984; Bitner et al., 2008;) is a close relative to the more commonly used customer journey map process (Følstad & Kvale, 2018; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Because services were often viewed as transactions, an experiential perspective requires much deeper and broader thinking about how the customer interacts with a service organization. Accordingly, the term touchpoints was developed and typically depicted horizontally on customer journey maps in accordance with a customer experience. These maps are often depicted into at least three separate periods, sometimes more—pre-service (calling, researching online), service (the service period refers to touchpoints that customers experience during an actual service [entering a parking lot, signage, engaging with employees, interacting with kiosks]), and post-service (posting to social media, an email incentive to return). Most firms today engage in some form of journey mapping and many use these maps as a foundation for decision-making within many areas of the business (strategy, operations, human resources, branding, etc.), and there are numerous reputable practical and scholarly guides to support the development of well-constructed customer journey maps (Edelman & Singer, 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rosenbaum et al., 2017)

5 Managing Diverse Customer Resources in the Co-production of a Service Experience

What Is the Topic and Why Is it Important to Managers?

Perhaps no topic is more discussed in discussions of present and future management practices than this one as organizations seek ways to substitute lower cost technology aided customer participation for employee interfaces in co-producing service experiences. Successfully doing this requires a careful balancing of customer expectations for employee involvement with the degree to which technology offers a viable substitute in service experiences (Solnet et al., 2019). These discussions range from the value of using simple telephone trees that direct callers to find their own desired party as substitutes for operators to the more complex AI applications that guide customers through financial transactions like investment management programs which substitute for an investment advisor (Paluch & Wirtz, 2020).

What Are Some Key Contributions from Scholarship?

Increasingly the trend has been to have customers, often with technological assistance, do for themselves what employees used to do for them to meet their service expectations (De Keyser et al., 2019; Xiao & Kumar, 2021; Wirtz, 2019). As the service dominant logic posits, both customers and companies co-create the value of a service by co-producing it (Ford et al., 2012; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Both must bring tangible and intangible resources and capabilities to that experience in some quantity and quality for the co-creation of value to be successful (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Some co-production experiences may require many customer and few company resources and some are just the opposite (Ford & McColl-Kennedy, 2015).

One important way in which customers can co-produce is to possess the required resources and capabilities designed into the expected role required of the customers while performing their part of the co-production experience and to be ready, willing, and able to use them (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015; Jaakkola et al., 2015). This role can be simple or complex but the important thing here is that the service provider has designed the service with an expected role performance by the customer in the service co-production that applies that customer's resources in a predetermined way (Hilton et al., 2013).

Thus, organizations have two issues of concern. One is to design the service in a way that can properly align resource requirements between the company

and the targeted customer. The issue is focused on the degree to which customers can and will perform their roles in co-production equal to what the organization has designed the experience to have them do (Bettencourt, 1997; Bowen, 1986; Ford & Bowen, 2004). The second issue is how can companies ensure the success of the service by preparing for variance in customers' willingness and capabilities to apply their own resources to perform the designed co-production roles (Ford & McColl-Kennedy, 2015).

This second issue requires the company to view the service as a totaled result of the combined resources of it and the customer (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015). This view results from analyzing the possibility of a can/will-do versus the must-do gap in the performance of all the tasks required in delivering a service to a customer (Ford & McColl-Kennedy, 2015). If, for example, an online portal is designed to require a customer to fill out a form and follow directions then there must be some fail-safe process created to ensure that those customers who either can't or won't fill out the form might still get the service expected (Heidenreich et al., 2015). TurboTax, a self-service tax preparation service, has multiple fail safes built into it to ensure that the customers using it are double checked, provided additional information to clarify questions, or given access to a live person to avoid clicking out when encountering problems in the experience. Likewise, Disney World offers strollers, wheel chairs, and lockers to its arriving customers who forgot or didn't anticipate needing them until they saw how big the parks are. Organizations in this era of social media have become increasingly attentive to not only their targeted customers but even those outside the standard experience design as their complaining voices are increasingly echoed in the social media and the press (Maecker et al., 2016).

How to deal with this potential co-production gap can take one of two paths. The first is an experience design path where the organization simulates various ways customers can arrive unprepared in the co-production process to identify and prepare to fill those gaps before they happen (e.g., Chen et al., 2015). They can do this by studying customers, making a careful review of complaints and service failures to identify design flaws, researching best practices in both trade and academic journals, or creating an actual simulation of the experience. Disney simulated Epcot before it opened to plan its food service capacity and locations and discovered that its designers had not accurately predicted what guests would actually do when seeking food outlets (Ford & Dickson, 2009). By careful study of customers' actual behaviors, organizations can learn when they come unprepared, unequipped, unable, or untrained to perform their expected roles in co-production (Bateson, 2002). Thus, the organization can erect signage to guide them, offer equipment to

supply whatever is missing, redesign the experience to correct problem areas, post employees at potential fail points, or offer a customer training process to ensure they know what they are supposed to do (Ford & Sturman, 2020).

The second path is to focus on customer willingness to apply their resources and capabilities to the co-production role (Handrich & Heidenreich, 2013). By studying customers the company can identify what motivates them to do what they need to do to ensure successful co-production. This path incorporates promoting customer self-efficacy, clarifying the co-production role, providing rewards that motivate role-related behaviors, and goal-setting.

There are several ways to induce customer willingness. One way for a company to get a customer to perform a required role in co-production is to build self-efficacy (Ford & Dickson, 2012). Some customers don't believe they can perform what is required of them, that their resources are adequate or their capabilities sufficient. Promoting customers' self-efficacy will, consequently, increase the likelihood that customers will perform the requisite co-production role. Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation and that belief will either motivate the customer to perform or not. There are strategies a company can employ to promote self-efficacy such as enactive mastery (e.g., setting a goal of improving on past successes, employee encouragement, self-talk imagery, success levels in gaming), vicarious experience (e.g., modeling success by others), verbal persuasion (e.g., friends and peers encouragement, self-talk encouragement, computer generated feedback), and physiological arousal (e.g., cheering, rousing music). These can include training employees to be encouraging when seeing a customer showing doubt, providing video screens that show other customers enjoying the experience, or displaying inspiring slogans and getting other customers to cheer. All these strategies are designed to boost the customer's confidence in successfully performing the tasks required in co-producing the experience (Ford & Dickson, 2012).

A second way to induce customer willingness is to assure the customers that if they perform the requisite co-production roles appropriately, then the experience will match their expectations (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003). Since the customer had a reason to seek out a service provider, then organizations can make it clear that if the customer performs the co-production role successfully, the customer will get whatever it was that was sought. The more important the reason or the greater the benefit, the more willing the customer should be to exert effort. Fulfilling a need or achieving a goal is motivating. Some customers are motivated to participate because of the benefits in time and money saved for taking on larger roles in co-production. Self-check in at hotels, buying take out at restaurants, or carrying their own bags saves

customers time and money (Meuter et al., 2000). Others are motivated by their personalities or their familiarity with the experience being offered, or they are simply looking for something to do while waiting for the other parts of the customer experience to take place. Some people also think they are able to do a better job of producing the desired service than an employee. Distinguishing when, where, and how much the customer should or should not be involved in any specific part of the overall customer experience depends on a customer-driven factors that management should identify and address as they vary by customers' capabilities and motivations.

The company also has to assess its costs and benefits as it designs the roles it expects customers to play in co-production along with identifying the resources and capabilities required to perform those roles (Ford & Sturman, 2020; Lovelock & Young, 1979; Mustak et al., 2016). Co-production is in the organization's interest when it can save money, increase production efficiency, or differentiate its service from that of competitors in a key way.

Organizations that see mutual benefits to co-production and try to encourage it must always have a backup plan to accommodate the fact that some customers will and some customers won't want to (or are unable to) participate. Those organizations that find ways of enabling customers to participate as much as possible in co-producing their own experiences will, however, decrease their costs and increase the value and quality of the service for those customers.

6 Conclusion to Chapter

If you asked any two scholars to identify the most important future trends in service management, you will get many options. We started with 22 and after much debate settled on the four which we included in this short space. We readily acknowledge that there are many others that have equal claim on inclusion. The issues of sustainability, over tourism, and transformative service for example are major discussions in the literature. The areas covered in this chapter and those which were not all contain countless questions and the need for future research. For example, the merger of human resource management and service management must collectively enhance our understanding of face the emerging dilemma of how to find entry level workers for increasingly sophisticated entry jobs. Similarly, the challenge of preparing people to ascend a corporate ladder that requires mastery of jobs that are increasingly computer assisted means a whole new level of training and selection requirements that most companies and employees are unprepared to meet. On the

customer side, the post-COVID era may see customers seeking facilities that have more space between customers than most currently available locations offer. Also, will customers now used to videoconferencing seek to avoid distant travel to meetings and conventions or even local travel to offices and shopping malls. Our point is simple. There will be more changes for both service organizations and their customers and an endless need for further research into these vital questions.

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