

# QUALITATIVE MARKETING IN SERVICE BUSINESS. A STRATEGIC APPROACH

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## **Abstract**

*Qualitative Marketing (QM) is based on psycho-sociological researches, regarding attitudes, opinions, needs, and constitutive values of lifestyles. It participate to the substantiation of strategic activities being used to generate new ideas, new approaches to customers, new advertising slogans, new selling arguments etc. In the service industry, the service quality is the most important element of competition and differentiation. Application of Qualitative Marketing in the services business is not only a condition but a necessity.*

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Whatever the strategic direction that is intended to be followed or the instrument used to achieve a strategic marketing objective, ensuring the quality level is a prerequisite and a condition of business success. Services business approach through a competitive and modern vision gives quality a central place with fundamental implications in ensuring the proper functioning of the company as a whole, establishing and maintaining a position in the market and in its development. We can say that the issues listed are the main strategic directions of any service companies that can be approached and implemented by building a strategic mix in a proper way.

A strategic approach that is based on a quality principles and objectives is a "winning strategy". By achieving it, everyone wins: customers, suppliers, managers. A quality service, results in attracting new customers, an increased volume of service production to current clients and losing less clients. Quality is the key element that creates loyal customers, customers satisfied with their choice, which will use the company's services in the future and will certainly recommend it.

In the service industry, the service quality is the most important element of competition and differentiation. A quality service is a preferable strategy because it ensures greater price stability in an environment of fierce competition and because it prevents incorrect service delivery, the cost of which recovery would be high.

Thus, marketing "is originally an essentially qualitative ..." has the task to implement a comprehensive approach to market players, becoming, along with quality marketing, a management tool to allow the construction of service offer according to demand.

The specific feature related to the global marketing belongs to the process of achieving the objectives a company by satisfying clients and partners based on their prior knowledge. Increased competition has forced companies, over time, to practice marketing even more, not to impose their own views of customers, but to meet the needs, expectations, modes of perception and interpretation, lifestyles etc., with intent to know and to address them as they are.

From the widening of the concept (Levy S. and P. Kilter 1969), marketing applies to any type of organization or field of activity (business marketing, social

marketing, cultural marketing, sports marketing, political marketing etc.) including service activities, being called Services Marketing.

Qualitative and quantitative marketing are not in opposition, but complement each other. First, allow the development of strategies to better understand the phenomena, clarifying decisions, the second contributes to the choice of market segments which must be satisfied and helps to dosing and scheduling action ways to be used, in fact, the marketing mix variables.

On the other hand, qualitative marketing differs from quantitative marketing by its objectives. Qualitative marketing aims: image, position, awareness, and attitudes, while quantitative marketing aims: increase sales, expand market share, develop a social media plan, and introduce a new product, increase customer retention and satisfaction.

What these objectives means?

**Image.** Customers aware of your business or its products and services have opinions related to price, quality, preference and value. These factors constitute the customers' image of your offerings. Positive customer image helps businesses because good exposure increases the likelihood of shareholder investment. Qualitative marketing objectives related to image include increasing the perceived value of a product, establishing a product as the standard for quality in its industry, and persuading consumers to elect a product as the "preferred choice." For example, slightly lowering the price of a high-quality product increases its value image among consumers.

**Position.** Position is the customer's opinion of where a product or service ranks compared with similar offerings from competitors. Businesses that do not actively create position for their services risk allowing competitors to influence customers' opinions. One goal of small marketing departments is to establish a product's quality or price as equivalent to larger competitors' products. They might also attempt to mark the product as the leader in a niche market or the vanguard in a new market; specializing might be preferable to competing if your small business has few resources.

**Awareness.** Positive image and trailblazer status are only valuable if customers are aware of the product. Qualitative marketing also aims to gauge whether customers are aware of a business' activities in the marketplace. For example, a qualitative marketing survey might ask consumers to rank the top five companies in an industry; if your small business doesn't register in the rankings, your operation might need more effective advertising.

**Attitudes.** Attitude is similar to image, but marketers seeking to improve consumers' attitudes usually ask questions about a business' non-operational activities. For example, a qualitative marketing survey focused on attitudes might ask about your business' place in the community, its stances on environmental protection and whether it fairly embraces competition. Small businesses that attend community events and make tax-deductible donations to local charities help achieve attitude-related qualitative marketing goals.

**Increase Sales.** If one of company's chief goals is to increase sales, be specific. A descriptive example of this objective would be to increase sales by 20 percent during the next fiscal year. This marketing objective is simple to measure.

**Expand Market Share.** Expanding market share is key to business growth and remaining relevant. Include a goal for how much market share you want to snap up and when you'd like to accomplish this objective. Numerous marketing tactics and strategies can be used to attain this objective, including conducting some competitive research or hiring one of many companies that will track your portion of market share compared with your major competitors. It's easy to quantify this objective — either you reach your goal in the allotted time or you don't.

**Develop a Social Media Plan.** Say that one of the objectives is to create a strong social media presence by building and maintaining a LinkedIn presence, creating a Facebook page or establishing a Twitter account. Then, can decide how many connections, fans or followers you'd like to have by a specific date, making measuring this objective a snap.

**Introduce a New Product.** The objective of introducing a new product is fairly simple to quantify, despite being one of the more ambitious company goals. The marketing department will have to reach a number of benchmarks in order to bring a new product to the marketplace in a predetermined time frame.

**Increase Customer Retention and Satisfaction.** Increasing customer retention and satisfaction is relatively easy to measure. Efforts to reach out to existing clientele to ensure they're happy with your services is a marketing function that may entail using a number of tactics, such as sending out customer satisfaction surveys. After reviewing returned surveys, you'll easily be able to measure customer satisfaction, and the success of any other strategies employed to bolster retention are easily identifiable simply by looking at your database or sales figures.

After ensuring the objectives of qualitative marketing, we can proceed to a greater extent, to establish and implement quantitative marketing strategies. Viewed from one point in a subsequent vision, the two coexist, marking different strategic directions but at the same time complementary and interdependent.

Qualitative marketing is based on psycho-sociological, regarding attitudes, opinions, needs, constitutive values of lifestyles. It must participate to the substantiation of strategic activities being used to generate new ideas, new approaches to customers, new advertising slogans, new selling arguments etc.

To exploit these opportunities, qualitative marketing take into account new important dimensions of organizational environment and determining the strategic approach, all means of action adapted each customer segment, through the marketing mix. Long time defined by the 4Ps, qualitative marketing adds two more elements: public relations and public powers (P. Kotler 1986), and in the case of service activities, three more elements: process, materiality and people.

### **Conclusion**

We can say that the service activity involves, certainly, because of its specificity, primarily a qualitative marketing approach to the service business, and then a quantitative one, and the global strategic approaches have to be based on a qualitative marketing mix.

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