

VPM's
DR VN BRIMS, Thane
Programme: MMS (2014-16)
Third Semester (Marketing) Examination October 2015

Subject	Services Marketing		
Roll No.		Marks	60 Marks
Total No. of Questions	7	Duration	3 Hours
Total No. of printed pages	3	Date	30.10.2015

Note: Q1 is compulsory and solve any FOUR from the remaining SIX questions.

Q1) 20 Marks (Compulsory) please study Case –Meera Travels

An Experience of a Bus Service. Meera Travels

Introduction: Here is a first person account of an experience of bus travel. The experience is anecdotal but has an important bearing on the state of private bus services.

Meera Travels is one of the oldest bus operator based out of Pune. In 2010 they started entering the Karnataka market; initially it was with 1 Volvo Multi-Axle bus to Mangalore and 3 Volvo Multi Axle buses to Bangalore. All their buses were brand new. I had never traveled in Meera travels earlier but had seen their buses plying in the Mumbai - Pune route for a long time.

I had been planning to visit my friend for quite some time, but time was never on my side. This time he insisted. I joked and said that I will come over the weekend. I was free that weekend and I had to keep my promise of visiting him. I decided try it out if tickets were available and I had a holiday on Monday.

Next day, I checked out the Konduskar travels, but the bus timing did not suit me. The limited time made me think of other alternatives. There were other buses services like VRL and Sharma that I had traveled earlier, on the same route. Both of them were good but this time wanted to try out something else. I decided on Meera Travels, said to be the hottest buses in the route they had 5 Volvo Multi Axle and 1 Mercedes Multi Axle bus in the Bangalore - Mumbai route and I was impressed (I am a fan of swanky buses!)

My first preference however, was not Meera since I had read a lot of horror stories in the net and recently a friend coming from Mumbai to Bangalore also had a bad experience. The 10PM Volvo Multi Axle bus from Meera was perfect, since it was a late night bus and I could catch the bus easily after office hours.

I booked a window seat in the 10PM Meera Travels Volvo Multi Axle bus from Bangalore to Kolhapur. I reached their Gandhinagar office in Bangalore at 9 PM With an hour to go I started my automobile photography which is my hobby. At 9.15 PM a brand new Meera entered, it was a beauty. I checked with the agent. He said "It's the 8.30 PM bus...."

10PM passed but no signs of my bus. I was getting anxious. The agent said "Sir Traffic is bad in city". I told him that it took less than 15 minutes go from Kalasipalyam to Gandhinagar even in peak hours. The agent smiled, the Seagull agency people were good and friendly. And the office was quite big with sufficient seats.

The bus at last appeared at 10.30 PM, I boarded it. The bus then went to Anand Rao Circle. The bus left at 11 PM after adding a few more passengers. But the bus moved a little further and entered a petrol pump for filling Diesel. The Passengers were getting restless. Said one "why can't they fill and come on time". . It took another 15 minutes at the station. Then it moved to Rajaji Nagar, there again it waited for 10 mins to get some passengers. After that again a unauthorized pick up at Yeshvanthpura since some seats were empty. So by the time it left Bangalore it was around 12.00 AM.

The bus had two LCD screens; they started playing the movie only at 11PM. It was a old 'Hera Peri' Movie. There were many students in the bus, all grumbled that they knew each and every dialog of this movie. They asked the agent to change. The assistant replied this was the only one he had. Mineral water was given to all passengers and blankets were already at the seat. The bus was clean and neat. And AC cooling was Normal in the beginning.

After an hour, of travel the bus stood for Dinner, the time was 12.45 AM. We had just

started and the break too early. The hotel was a road side Dabha which was good only for truck drivers. It was a unfit for Volvo passengers, so no one took any food. It looked like Meera Travels had not given any guidance or any instructions to staff on the kind of hotels to stop for food. To cap it all, we saw the 10.30 PM Meera Volvo also passing us. We are still near Bangalore only.

The bus left after 1.00AM, I thought that now they would try to make up for the delay. But the bus was traveling very slow just around 60 - 70 kmph. It was dark, and the driver reduced the AC and it was getting hot. The bus was a Semi sleeper but this was one was not as good as the other two buses which I had seen earlier. The ride was not smooth; the driver was pretty slow and was applying sudden brakes.

I didn't get a good sleep. There were also some chatter boxes in the bus who went on talking till 3 AM. Sometimes, I wonder why some people had no sense. We passed Davanagere at 3.30 AM after which somehow I tried to get some sleep. Some pick-ups and drops happening at every few intervals.

Early morning my eyes opened with a beautiful view outside. Time was around 5.45 AM. Little rain and lush green surroundings was a beauty for eyes. I was not able to figure out where I was. Seeing the good roads outside I thought we were in Maharashtra. After a while the assistant came and was calling Hubli passengers. I recoiled in horror we were still in Hubli! The next stop was Belgaum. Time was around 7 AM. Another 100 odd KMS to Kolhapur.

At Nippani, the bus stopped and guesses what the assistant went and opened the luggage door on the side. And there appeared the other driver coming out of the luggage area." Oh my God ", I thought; I had never seen a driver sleeping in the luggage area in a Volvo. Felt sad, for the driver, there is no air circulation or window there. God knows how he slept all the way from Tumkur to Nippani. Owners didn't seem to be bothered on their employee's welfare. In most of the other Volvo Or Mercedes buses the drivers sleep in a extra seat allotted to them or else they have a rear berth specifically for drivers only. Vishal Travels Multi Axle and Sharma Transport which I had traveled earlier both had this system.

Everyone in the bus was hungry; there was no sign of stopping. At last at 8.30 AM, it stopped at a hotel some 20 KMS before Kolhapur. The hotel was sad and washrooms were limited. Again not the type of hotels fit for Volvo customers.

There was one National Travels Volvo and one more Meera already standing there. The other Meera Travels was a brand new one and was a beauty. Little showers made the weather cool and my bus was also getting a face wash. After all the Tea party the bus left the hotel at 9AM . The same old movie started. Checked with the driver the driver said the bus will stop at the bypass and will not go inside Kolhapur city. At last my Journey on the Meera Travels Volvo Multi Axle ended at 9.30AM.

Overall I can say that Meera buses are very good, but management needs to wake up and fix up smaller issues at ground level. Being a big company I think the management seem to have lost control on what is happening under their nose. They have invested a lot in buses, hope now they invest their time in setting up the processes and provide good travel experience in future.

For travelers, compared to some of the unbranded operators Meera Travels seemed to be good choice. But don't expect a 'Wow' service from them always. You can keep Meera Travels as also one of the options; they are not that bad as per my experience. You can enjoy their buses for sure; they have one of the best fleets currently.

Questions: Answer any two out of three questions.

1. Describe how the Servuction system can be used to map the moments of truth in this case.
2. What is the importance of the role of productivity and quality in a service such as the one described above. Suggest how Productivity and quality can be improved in a case such as the above.
3. Explain the process of how customer evaluates a services and what steps can be taken to reduce the level of risk in the service encounter.

Attempt Any FOUR from the Remaining SIX Questions

Q2) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

What are the different types of services? Classify the following services and describe the challenges to a marketer in them.

- a) Banking services
- b) Legal services
- c) A residence rental service.

Q3) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

Explain how risk plays an important part in how consumers perceive and evaluate service. What steps do companies take to reduce the consumer's risk perception in the following service scenarios?

- a) Going on a holiday abroad
- b) Participating in a sailing experience
- c) Booking a Mumbai – Srinagar journey ticket on Indian Railways

Q4) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

Explain why services tend to be harder for customers to evaluate than goods in the following service

- a) Selling and Buying on OLX.com
- b) Undergoing treatment on medical insurance
- c) Using ATM to withdraw money and get account balances

Q5) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

Using the flower of service and or flow charts develop the service concept for the following services. Distinguish front-stage and back-stage activities.

- a) Bus services for school students
- b) College Cafeteria
- c) City courier services

Q6) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

It is said that revenue management is an important marketing operation to maximize revenues and profits. Explain what actions you would undertake in the following cases.

- a) A multiplex offering cinema shows.
- b) A multipurpose conference hall
- c) A daycare center for working women

Q7) Any two from (a) or (b) or (c) ————— (5x2) = 10 Marks

What are the different dimensions of a servicescape? What is its importance to a marketer for the following services?

- a) A Large service Hotel
- b) An automobile repair workshop
- c) A mobile telecom sales and service outlet.