

Competitive Advantage through Service Excellence in an Increasingly Technology-Dominated Era

Dr. A. Parasuraman
University of Miami, Florida, USA

In this opening presentation, Dr. Parasuraman will start with the critical importance of service excellence (as manifested by service quality and customer experience) for achieving *sustainable* competitive advantage. Effective customer experience management is becoming an especially critical issue in light of the rapid pace at which technology is permeating company-customer interactions, leading to what might be termed as “technology—service convergence” in that technology is increasingly becoming intertwined with service delivery. By drawing upon key insights from his extensive research on the topics of *service quality*, *technology readiness* of customers, and *service productivity*, Dr. Parasuraman will discuss key implications for effectively managing customer experience in an era of increasing technology—service convergence.

Dr. Parasuraman’s presentation will provide an overview of (a) the “Gaps Model of Service Quality,” a framework for understanding service quality from the perspectives of both customers and service organizations; (b) the SERVQUAL approach for measuring service quality from the customers’ perspective; (c) the “technology readiness” [TR] of customers (i.e., their propensity to embrace and use technology-based systems), which is becoming critical due to the growing role of technology in service delivery; and (d) a framework that links service quality to service productivity. He will use company examples from different sectors to illustrate key points. He will conclude his presentation by highlighting the interlinking of service quality, service innovation (especially technology-based service enhancements) and service productivity.

The presentation will be followed by a Q&A and open discussion about service-related issues/challenges in the forum participants’ organizations, as well as potential approaches for effectively tackling those issues/challenges.

Forum Objectives

The primary objectives of this industry forum are to enable forum participants to:

- Gain a good understanding of what superior service really means from the customer's perspective
- Adapt and apply well-established frameworks to assess and improve customer service and customer experience in their organizations
- Understand the benefits and avoid the pitfalls of using technology-based services to enhance the experience of customers, while simultaneously improving service productivity and efficiency from the organization’s perspective
- Gain insights from discussing service-related issues faced fellow participants in various sectors