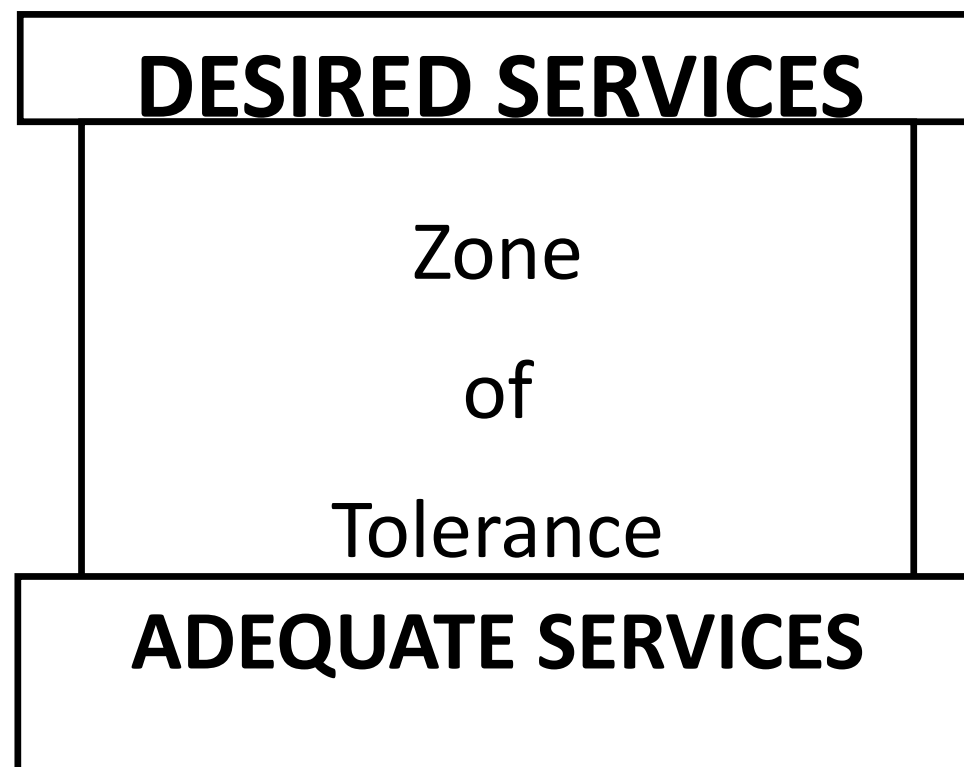# KENYA UTALII COLLEGE

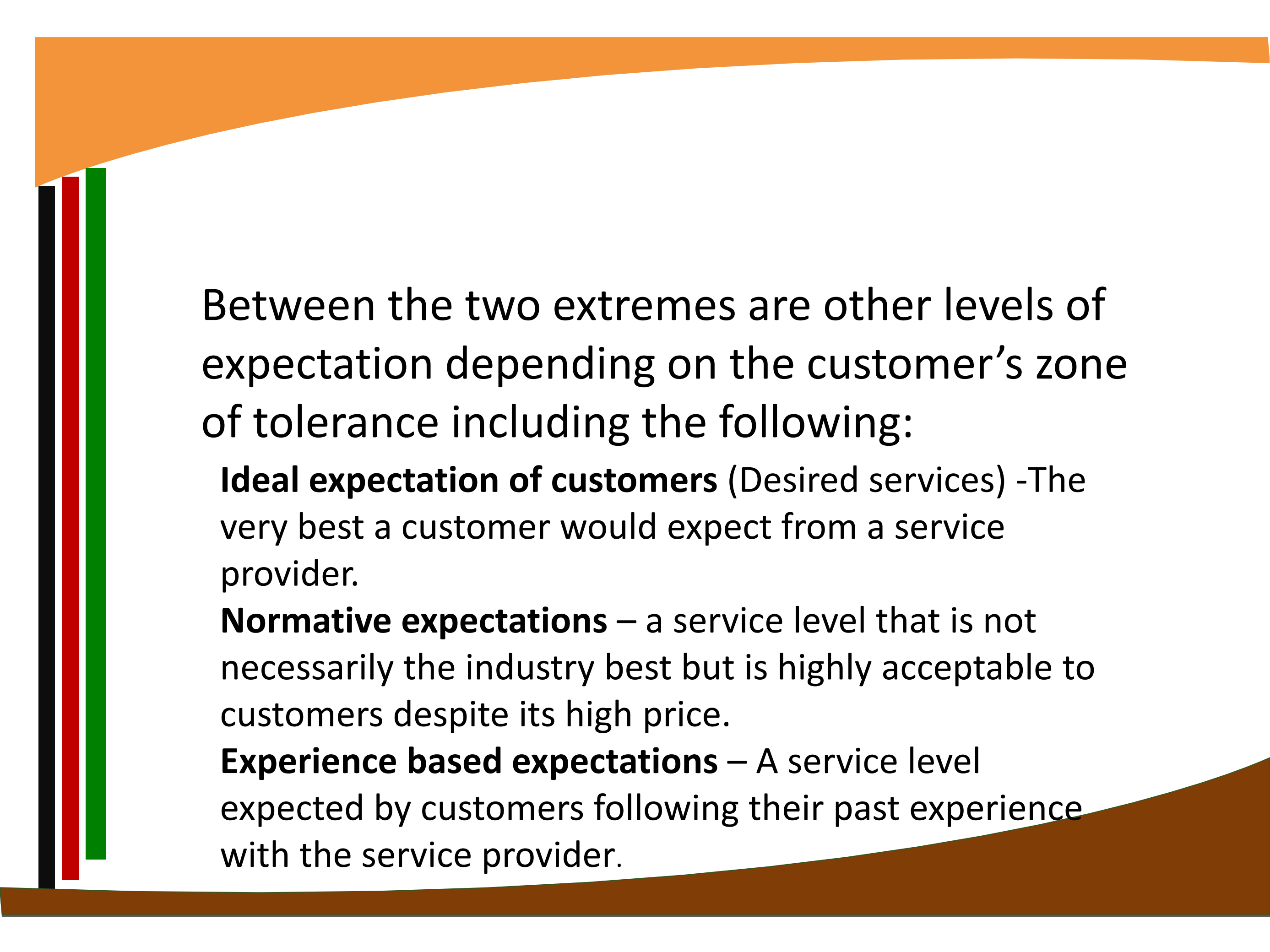# Principles of Customer Care

B. Makawiti,MBS

Understanding and Anticipating customer needs

- Customer needs – Physiological and Psychological

- Customer wants – Cultural, Social, Personal

- Customer Expectations – Key influences

Customer Expectations

There are two extremes of customer expectation i.e. Desired (Ideal expectation) and tolerable (adequate expectations).

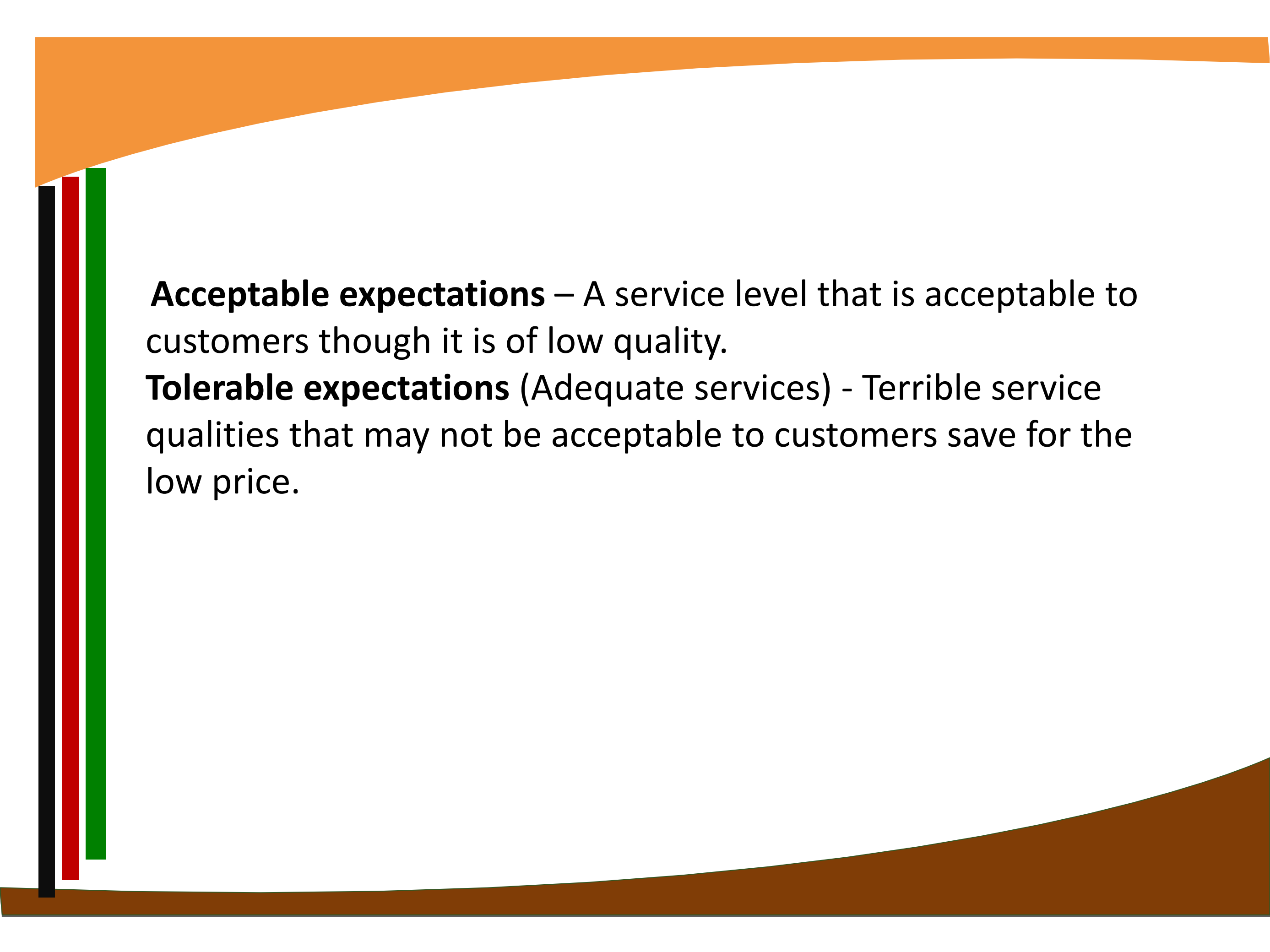| DESIRED SERVICES |
|:---:|
| Zone |
| of |
| Tolerance |
| **ADEQUATE SERVICES** |

Between the two extremes are other levels of expectation depending on the customer's zone of tolerance including the following:

Ideal expectation of customers (Desired services) -The very best a customer would expect from a service provider.

Normative expectations – a service level that is not necessarily the industry best but is highly acceptable to customers despite its high price.

Experience based expectations – A service level expected by customers following their past experience with the service provider.

Acceptable expectations – A service level that is acceptable to customers though it is of low quality.

Tolerable expectations (Adequate services) - Terrible service qualities that may not be acceptable to customers save for the low price.

How to Meet Customer Expectations

- People
  Process
- Physical Evidence
- Reliability
- Security
- Promptness
- Responsiveness
- Politeness
- Friendliness
- Clarity
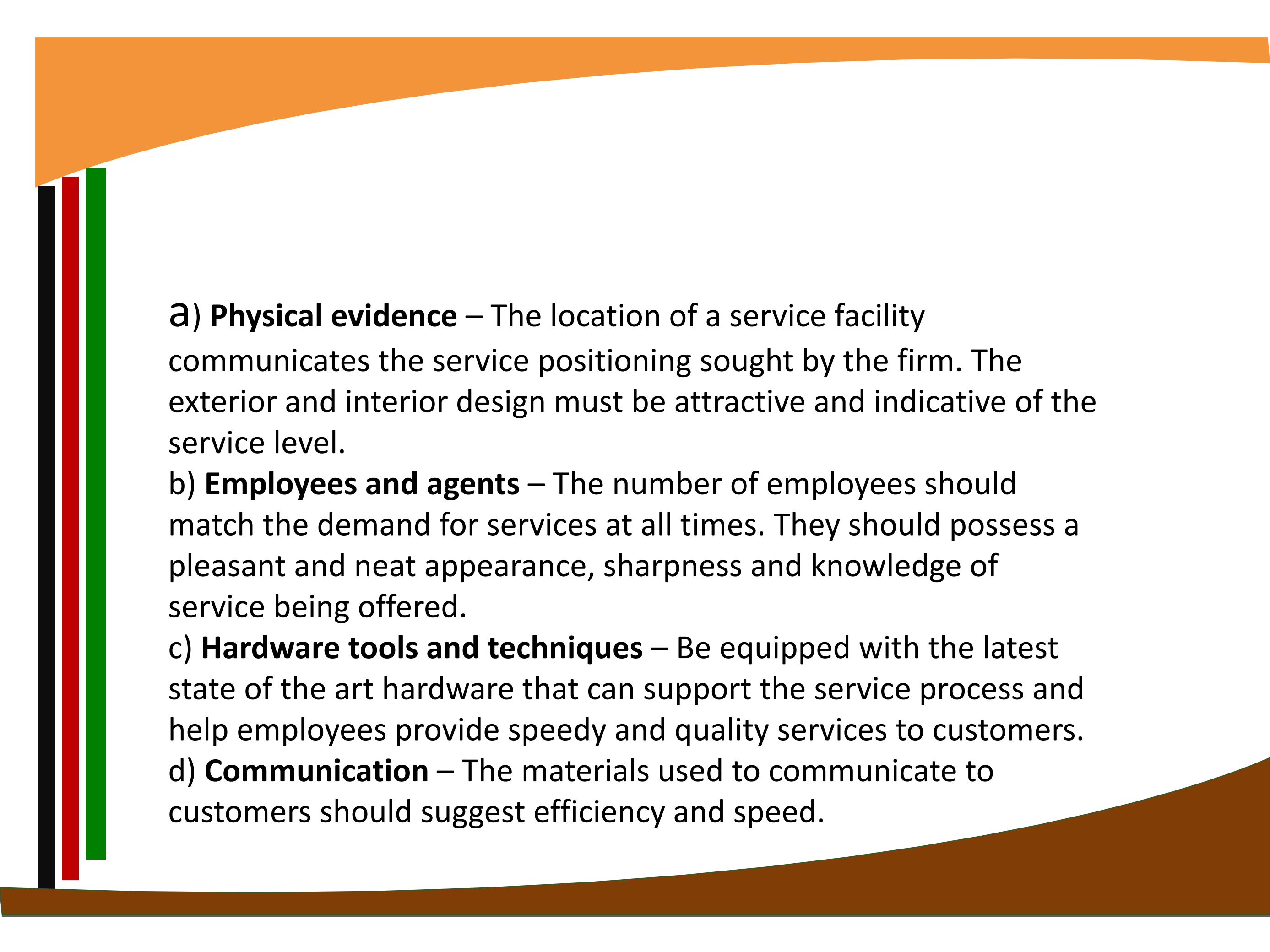
Meet customer needs -**prevent complaints**
Exceed customer needs – **Build Loyalty –
Positive word of mouth/Viral marketing**
Delight the customer - **customer retention**

- Customer Expectations- Perceived service by customer
- Management understanding of customer expectation
- Employee translation of expectations to service delivery
- Service delivery as per expectations

Factors affecting quality of service

Intangibility

Services cannot be seen tasted felt heard or smelt before they are bought unlike physical products. Intangibility creates a feeling of uncertainty about the outcome of a service. The process of making a service tangible requires a company to pay attention to the following;

a) **Physical evidence** – The location of a service facility communicates the service positioning sought by the firm. The exterior and interior design must be attractive and indicative of the service level.

b) **Employees and agents** – The number of employees should match the demand for services at all times. They should possess a pleasant and neat appearance, sharpness and knowledge of service being offered.

c) **Hardware tools and techniques** – Be equipped with the latest state of the art hardware that can support the service process and help employees provide speedy and quality services to customers.

d) **Communication** – The materials used to communicate to customers should suggest efficiency and speed.

Inseparability

Services cannot be separated from the service provider. The production, delivery and consumption of services take place simultaneously in the buyer seller interactions.

Variability

Services are highly variable. It is almost impossible to have the same service from the same seller the second time.

Perishability

Services perish as soon as they are offered. They cannot be stored.

Customer participation

Service production process involves customer participation and hence customers are co-producers of services. The service quality depends on the ability, skill and performance of the customer.

No ownership

Service consumers will have experiences but not ownership. Since services are perishable and intangible, the question of ownership does not arise.

Providing Personalized service using the SERVQUAL Instrument

Reliability

1. Providing services as promised.

2. Dependability in handling customers' service problems.

3. Performing services right the first time.

4. Providing services at the promised time.

5. Maintaining error-free records.

Responsiveness

6. Keeping customers informed about when services will be performed.

7. Prompt service to customers.

8. Willingness to help customers.

9. Readiness to respond to customers' requests.

Assurance

10. Employees who instill confidence in customers.

11. Making customers feel safe in their transactions.

12. Employees who are consistently courteous.

13. Employees who have the knowledge to answer customer questions.

Empathy

14. Giving customers individual attention.

15. Employees who deal with customers in a caring fashion.

16. Having the customer's best interest at heart.

17. Employees who understand the needs of their customers.

18. Convenient business hours.

Tangibles

19. Modern equipment.

20. Visually appealing facilities.

21. Employees who have a neat, professional appearance.

22. Visually appealing materials associated with the service.

Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1988)

Delivering value to customer

- Stand out in the crowd
- Your response time to service delivery matters
- Know what the customer needs and wants and exceed his expectations
- Fix mistakes timely
- Go out of your way
- Think of the customer as Customer for Life