Market Leader Through Service Excellence

World-Class Approaches to Managing Excellent Services
More Praise for *Market Leader Through Service Excellence*

»Customers expect state of the art digital solutions, end-to-end, along the whole customer journey. But only human interaction can exceed customers’ expectations in the financial services industry. This book offers great insights and valuable advice.«

Sandra Ickinger, Head of Global Customer Experience Management, Mercedes-Benz Mobility AG

»‘Market Leader Through Service Excellence’ book is educational and useful for everyone who is involved or interested in the services industry. It is rich and deep in many core issues that service practitioners encountered; and offers future-oriented perspectives to explore ‘what’s else.’ Ideas sprouted as I read the book, shifting perspectives for how I view service challenges and finding value in the big picture and the finer details the book offers. The real organisational cases offer provoking thoughts to enhance customer experiences and build a customer-centric culture. Thank you for the comprehensive service excellence pointers all in one book.«

Dr. BeeLeng Seow, Facili-Trainer and Service Excellence Evangelist, Continuum Learning Pte Ltd

»This book is the perfect companion for anyone looking to convince board-level executives to implement customer-centric practices and strive for service excellence. A thoroughly comprehensive guide from strategy, to employee and culture, to application-oriented tips on how outstanding customer experiences are created. Dr. Gouthier is spot on: in service excellence, ‘standing still is taking a step back.’ A big thanks to him and his team for this comprehensive Service Excellence gem.«

Denisa Spinkova, Leading Service Excellence at Qatar Tourism
Service Management | Services Marketing Series

Edited by
Prof. Dr. Matthias Gouthier

Volume 8
Market Leader Through Service Excellence

World-Class Approaches to Managing Excellent Services
Service excellence: A cross-industry attitude that may also be tasty for a patient!

Carsten K. Rath

Do you remember your last exceptional service experience? I hope so for your sake because it means that you were positively surprised by a service or, better yet, by the warm attitude of the person performing it and the processes behind it. In my capacity as a service expert and a frequent guest in unique hotels and resorts around the world, I have experienced service in many forms, on a grand scale and in the many detailed intricacies that differentiate true excellence from standardized processes. To truly wow me with services is certainly challenging, yet the diverse teams in hospitality succeed in doing so time and again.

Of course, I still remember my last experience of service very clearly: It was a holiday in 2021. The hotels in Germany were still closed mainly due to the pandemic, while I was already experiencing personal hospitality again in Switzerland. I was sitting in the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, perhaps the best resort in the Alps, jotting down initial ideas for our article and placing my breakfast order while still half lost in thought. I ordered the usual, including a freshly brewed tea from Ronnefeldt and a soft-boiled egg. Nothing unusual, really, but this meal was placed on my table as neatly as a pin. The egg was neatly, almost symmetrically, cut and meticulously closed again so that I did not have to break it myself and eat it half dented. It was a small but fine detail that thrilled me like a hungry guest and even prompted me to mention it here as a positive episode.

The rest of my breakfast at the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz was also a delight. It sweetened my day even before I got to know the actual perks of the resort. I usually only find such attention to detail in the 101 best hotels in Germany (www.die-101-besten.com). In any case, the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is mentioned in the new edition of the hotel rankings among the luxurious neighbors of the best 101. The wonderful nuances make a noticeable difference in the processes and, ultimately, for the guest.

Service excellence has been my passion for over 25 years. From my experience as a traveler and as a management consultant, I know that interpersonal relationships and the service attitude that is implemented every day distinguish a company that is successful in the long term from mediocrity.
This is true without exception across all industries and is becoming even more relevant. Since 2020, the global economy has been dominated by the coronavirus crisis. Innovations or new ideas seem to have taken a back seat. Everything is focused on health, medical technology and efficiency. But especially when it comes to the sensitive and complex topic of health, the human factor is the only one that really counts, because only what shines healthily on the inside can shine vibrantly on the outside.

In a hotel or resort, excellent service begins even before the guests arrive for their stay. This constitutes exceptional service; the customers and guests always receive a little more than expected.

The team at Helios Hospitals also starts with healthcare services long before an actual stay in hospital. Since the beginning of their corporate history, they have combined medical care with the highest quality standards, extensive preventive measures and a pronounced understanding of service in everyday hospital life. The project presented, “6 Chefs, 12 Stars,” puts culinary arts on the list of priorities at Helios Hospitals. Together with six star chefs, tasty and healthy dishes are designed for inpatients and they are implemented by Hofmann Menue-Manufaktur. Since 2020, we have been combining culinary experiences with the often painful stays in hospital and making the patients’ time as pleasant as possible. This is precisely the goal of lived service excellence: to make the lives of customers and patients more convenient and more pleasant. In our article, you can read the detailed background to the project and an outlook on the future of everyday hospital life at Helios Hospitals.

I hope you enjoy it!
Foreword

“Customer service is a permanent construction site!” This is probably the best way to describe my personal experience with various service providers in recent years. While the companies communicate their service with full-bodied advertising promises, in practice, the customer often experiences a completely contrary situation: faulty services, incorrect billing, absent callbacks and much more. It is precisely in such deficient service markets that differentiation is best achieved by offering an above-average level of service. However, the problem is that excellent service does not just happen by itself. Sole proprietors, freelancers and micro-enterprises have a relatively intuitive feeling for what it takes (or should take) to provide an above-average, i.e., excellent, service. By contrast, medium-sized companies and, in particular, large enterprises require structured concepts, measures, and tools to successfully implement and live the idea of service excellence in the long term. Large companies, in particular, have their company-specific approaches. However, to raise all companies interested in providing excellent services to a higher level as a whole, a general, inter-sectoral approach was needed. Therefore, in March 2018, the Technical Committee ISO/TC 312 was initiated, which I have been leading as Chairman since then. With ISO 23592:2021, the first globally valid standard was published in June 2021 to define the principles of service excellence and a corresponding model. This provides companies planning to implement or optimize service excellence with a general guideline. However, what is missing and cannot be identified in such a standard are concrete and detailed best practices and how they work in practice.

The publisher’s volume “Market Leader Through Service Excellence – World-Class Approaches to Managing Excellent Services” is dedicated to the exciting question of how service excellence is implemented and lived by and in successful companies. The book’s structure is based on the model of service excellence as anchored in the new ISO standard 23592:2021. The model identifies four dimensions with nine elements that must be fulfilled to meet the holistic requirements of service excellence. To this end, proven experts from a wide range of industries present best practices, concepts, and a variety of methods and tools that show readers successful ways to implement service excellence.

The book, which was published as volume 8 in the series “Service Management | Services Marketing” by Nomos Verlag (www.nomos.de),
comprises a total of 14 application-oriented articles by experts which, in
addition to providing more general explanations of the concept of service
excellence, focus on the four dimensions of the service excellence model.
After an introductory presentation of the relevance and the model of ser­
vice excellence based on ISO 23592:2021, the book examines the strategic
dimension first. This is followed by a closer look at employee and cultural
perspectives as the second dimension. The third dimension focuses on
how outstanding customer experiences are created. Finally, the fourth
dimension is devoted to operational service excellence.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my research assistants, Ms.
Nora Kern and Ms. Carina Nennstiel, who actively supported me during
the compilation process. Furthermore, I would like to thank Mr. Carsten
Rehbein from Nomos Verlag, who made the realization of this edited
volume possible. Finally, I would like to thank Nomos Verlag directly for
publishing this book.

This edited volume is aimed at top decision makers, specialists and
managers, and academics looking for sound advice, concepts, recommend­
dations for action, and best practices on how service excellence can be
successfully implemented in companies.

Now, above all, I hope you enjoy reading it and that you can derive
maximum value from the various best practices it presents.

Koblenz, June 2022

Matthias Gouthier
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About the authors
Excellent service does not just happen by itself. Best-in-class companies worldwide use concepts that have established themselves under the label “service excellence.” The edited volume “Market Leader Through Service Excellence – World-Class Approaches to Managing Excellent Services” is dedicated to the essential question of how service excellence is implemented and lived by and in successful companies. The structure of the book is based on the model of service excellence as it is anchored in the ISO standard 23592:2021. To this end, proven experts from various industries present best practices demonstrating successful ways to implement service excellence.

With contributions from

»On the journey to create ‘customers for life’, nothing is more endearing than exceptional service experiences. In ‘Market Leader Through Service Excellence’, Dr. Gouthier provides both the inspiration and playbook to help leaders convert service excellence from worthy aspiration into operational reality.«

Wayne Simmons, Customer Experience Leader at Bayer Pharmaceuticals, and member of the Customer Experience Professionals Association (CXPA) board of directors

»Matthias Gouthier describes in this book the new global service excellence standard with many business examples that inspire readers to start or continue their service excellence journey. A must read work for every top service professional.«

Dr. Jean-Pierre Thomassen, Chairman, Dutch Service Excellence Foundation

»A very nice treatment of topical, yet still somewhat unstructured domain of service excellence. I found the detailed coverage of key aspects particularly useful.«

Tuulia Timonen, Head of PSC Service Excellence, Posti Group

»I loved reading ‘Market Leader Through Service Excellence! It is packed with great ideas and practical advice, and I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who wants to embark on a journey towards service excellence!«

Professor Jochen Wirtz, Vice Dean MBA Programmes, National University of Singapore