

Services marketing

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Course aims

The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of service marketing, emphasizing its distinctive features and the specific challenges inherent to this sector, which now represents the predominant component of economic activity in most countries. The course adopts a strategic approach to service marketing, considering it as a critical competitive tool not only for service-based organizations but also for firms offering tangible products. Students will explore the foundational principles of service marketing alongside a detailed analysis of its unique challenges, application domains, and contemporary issues.

Course contents

This 9 ECTS course comprises 54 hours of instruction delivered during the second semester of the second academic year. The curriculum includes the following core topics:

- Introduction to the nature and role of services
- The service economy: sub-sectors and ethical considerations
- Key differences between goods and services
- Consumer behaviour in service contexts
- Service delivery processes
- Service pricing strategies
- Communication strategies in service marketing
- The physical evidence and service environment
- People as a strategic asset: service personnel and customers
- Customer satisfaction
- Service quality management
- Complaint handling and service recovery
- Customer loyalty and retention strategies
- Developing a service-oriented organizational culture

Throughout the course, students will engage in practical exercises, group projects, case study analyses, and structured discussions on real-world business cases.

Exam

The final assessment will consist of an oral examination. Detailed information regarding the exam and evaluation criteria will be provided during the course.

Bibliography

- Lecture notes. Slides and other materials possibly used during the lectures.
- Main textbook: Hoffman, K. D. & Bateson, J. E., *Services Marketing*, Pearson, 2024 (ISBN 9788891936578).
- Additional textbooks:
 - Luigi Golzio, *The Organization of Service Enterprises. Text, Cases and Examples*, Giappichelli Editore, Turin, second edition, 2021.
 - Zeithaml, V.A., Bitner, M.J., Gremler, D.D., Mende, M., *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm*, Eighth Edition, McGraw-Hill.
- Further bibliographic references will be provided during the lectures.