In order to win loyal customers, it is for service organisations an increasing challenge to take account of the customer needs in the design and the management of the service operations. This is true for the B-to-C (business-to-consumer) and B-to-B (business-to-business) environments. In this course, the emphasis is on developing the service delivery system by introducing some tools and skills. These tools and skills must help the service manager to
(1) clearly position the service organisation,
(2) define, measure and analyse the performance of the service delivery process,
(3) optimise the service delivery process,
(4) understand the impact of the environment (the so-called servicescape),
(5) understand the role of people and technology in the service delivery and
(6) know how to innovate in a service context.

Contents

- The nature of service: the characteristics of services and their consequences for service management.
- Service positioning and the service concept: Due to the intangibility, service firms must position themselves very well.
- Service positioning in a the B-to-B context: servitisation: industrial firms introduce new services to surround their tangible products in order to differentiate themselves.
- Service performance measurement. Due to the intangibility of services, it is difficult to measure the performance such as productivity and quality.
- Process management in services: Services are processes. How to manage these service processes is a crucial question.
- Capacity management: balancing supply and demand is very important in a service
environment where supply is perishable and demand highly volatile. Special attention is paid to the phenomenon of waiting.
- Facilities management: Environmental factors (such as lay-out, signs) can have an important impact on the service experience.
- The role of technology and people in service organisations. People and Technology are two important assets in services. How can we leverage them?
- Innovation in services. Innovation is a well-known concept in a manufacturing context. What is innovation in services?

In this course, several tools are discussed such as the service triangle, service blueprinting, servitisation, servicescape, simulation, service transaction analysis and data envelopment analysis.

Initial competences
Students must have some basic knowledge about operations and production management.

Final competences
1. To analyse and evaluate the service of an organisation on strategic and operational level, in B-to-C and B-to-B markets.
2. To design, improve and evaluate the service processes, taking into account the servicescape.
3. To evaluate the application of six sigma and lean in services.
4. To evaluate the behaviour of customers as participants in the service delivery process.
5. To acquire the needed analytical and social skills, and attitudes to apply the knowledge in practice (cases).

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods
Guided self-study, group work, lecture, seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods
Active and interactive method of education based on cases and the chapters of the book. The students are expected to study the book chapter via self-learning and to apply these principles on case studies which must be prepared in beforehand. Class room and on-line participation in the case discussions is requested. There will be a group assignment to apply service management principles in practice.

Learning materials and price
number of articles and case studies
Total Cost: 85 EUR

References

Course content-related study coaching
The very interactive way of teaching allows the teacher to have a continuous feeling whether or not the students understand the concepts.

Evaluation methods
end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
Written examination with open questions, written examination with multiple choice questions

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period
Written examination with open questions, written examination with multiple choice questions

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation
Oral examination, participation, peer assessment, report
Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation
examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods
The permanent evaluation consists of an evaluation of the group assignment and the
preparation for and participation in the case studies. The evaluation of the group assignment is based on a written report, a presentation and peer assessment. There is also an evaluation of the participation during the case discussion. The periodical evaluation consists of a written exam with multiple choice questions for the theoretical part (book) and the cases, and open questions which are related to a case study which is not discussed in the course.

Calculation of the examination mark
Permanent (50%) and end-of-term evaluation (50%).

Facilities for Working Students
Work students will be asked for an extended written preparation of the case studies instead of their participation in the classroom when they cannot participate in the sessions. Work students should be able to participate in the group assignment.

(Approved)