

STANDARDIZING/ADAPTING SERVICES CROSS-NATIONALLY

Jean-Claude Usunier prepared this case solely to provide material for class discussion. The author does not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a business situation. The author may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

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Version: (A) 2004-07-01

Discuss arguments in favour of standardizing or adapting service operations in the following service industries

- private banking,
- telecommunications,
- hairdresser,
- motor insurance,
- life insurance,
- hotels,
- Haute Cuisine restaurants,
- satellite launch.

You may distinguish different subsets of the service industry or different market segments within this service industry; You have to consider three aspects in each industry:

- 1/ whether the service and its characteristics are more or less standard world-wide;
- 2/ whether consumer behaviour and especially the service encounter differs across domestic markets;
- 3/ whether the pattern of competition within the industry (size of actors, geographic areas of competition, and so on) tends to correspond to a global or to a multi-domestic industry.

You may take into account the following issues in your discussion of service encounters:

- Does language have an influence on the service encounter?
- Does religion have an influence on attitudes towards the service and on the service encounter?
- Do time attitudes (waiting, long term orientation, fatalism, linear vs. cyclical views of time, etc.) have an influence on the service encounter (pre-process, in-process, post-process)?
- Are there standards for this service industry? What is their reach?
- Learning and adjustment of local personnel to new rules of behaviour imposed on them by global corporate standards, especially as concerns their attitudes to service customers.

You may Google to get some additional insights on the issues above.