

Module 1. Customer expectations and satisfaction

In this course of the Strategic Management for Events, Leagues, and Competitions Certificate, focusing on managing service quality in sport, we will delve deeper into understanding and appreciating that, as all sports are indeed services, their quality needs to be managed appropriately and strategically.

To do so, in module one, we will investigate customer expectations and satisfaction. Understanding the importance of these two concepts and their practical applications can help us set the basis for understanding how to manage service quality, and ensure the delivery of a successful event, league, or competition. In module two, we will centre on understanding customer needs and better unpacking this important, yet at times overlooked, black box that sets the basis for a sport event, league, or competition. In module three, we will focus on service delivery, by capturing the elements it entails and how they materialise in the case of sport events, leagues, or competitions. Finally, in module four, we will examine perceived service quality, by once again appreciating that a sport event, league, or competition is a service, and that, as such, its quality depends on how it is perceived by the customers. All the above concepts in all modules of this course will be explored in detail, capturing both their theoretical grounding and, importantly, their practical application through real life examples and useful managerial recommendations.

Unit 1.1

In this first module of the Managing Service Quality in Sport Events course, as well as in the course overall, we will focus on sport events, since they represent the focus of all organisers, be it there a single sport event, a sport competition, or a sport league. Ultimately, their role involves the organising of one or multiple events that occur often or periodically. For example, in a league, regular and multiple events are organised weekly for all participating teams on an annual basis. In the case of a competition, multiple events are organised in a very short period that will be staged periodically every one, two, four, or more years. As such, and despite the different wording used, all events, leagues, and competitions are focused on the organisation and management of events, so this course will focus on how to manage their quality strategically.

Another element of strategic importance to understand is how sport and particularly sport events are above all services; this is something that will be discussed below.



Unit 1.2 Sport events as services

Sport events can be considered services, as they involve the provision of an experience to customers. To better appreciate sport events as services, we need to consider the elements described in the following paragraphs.

First, like other services, sport events are intangible in nature (Schneider and White, 2004). Customers do not take away a physical product, but rather experience the event itself. The value lies in the intangible benefits and emotions that customers derive from attending the event.

Second, sport events often require active participation from customers (Williams and Buswell, 2003). While spectators are not directly involved in the physical gameplay, they engage emotionally, cheer for their teams, and contribute to the overall atmosphere and experience of the event. Simultaneously, sport events provide opportunities for customer interactions with various stakeholders, including event staff, fellow fans, players, and sponsors. These interactions can enhance the overall experience and create memorable moments for attendees.

At the same time, the service delivery process in sport events involves various elements, such as ticketing, venue management, security, hospitality, concessions, and entertainment. These components work together to create a seamless and enjoyable experience for the attendees, and, as such, they are of strategic importance, as we will discuss throughout this course.

Sport events are often characterised by the emotions and entertainment they provide (Williams and Buswell, 2003). Customers expect an engaging and exciting experience that evokes emotions such as joy, excitement, and anticipation. The entertainment value is a critical aspect of sport events as services. In line with this element of entertainment, sport event, league, or competition organisers can offer customisation and personalisation options to cater to individual customer preferences. This may include options for premium seating, hospitality packages, or special experiences that enhance the overall event experience for specific customer segments. This customisation would not be applicable in the case of a product, further stressing why sport events are clearly considered services.

Finally, the service experience does not end when the event concludes (Brown, 1991). The post-event experience can include follow-up communication, access to event highlights or exclusive content, and opportunities for customer feedback or engagement. Maintaining a positive post-event experience contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty, as we will also discuss further on.



Finally, a topic often not captured is the strategic importance of service recovery (Brown, 1991). In the event of any service failures or customer dissatisfaction, effective service recovery measures are essential. Addressing issues promptly and satisfactorily can help retain customers and mitigate any negative impacts on their perception of the event and the service provider.

As it is argued through all the above, understanding sport events as services allows organisers to focus on delivering a holistic and memorable experience that meets customer expectations. By considering the unique characteristics of services and actively managing the various touchpoints, sport event, league, or competition organisers can enhance customer satisfaction, build loyalty, and differentiate themselves in the competitive sports market.

Having therefore established that examining sport events as services is important in managing them strategically, we will now focus on the topic of managing service quality.

Sport events are:

- **Intangible in nature. Customers do not take away a physical product, but rather experience the event itself.**
- Tangible in nature. Customers take away a physical product, without necessarily experiencing the event itself.

Unit 1.3 Managing service quality

Managing service quality is crucial for businesses to meet customer expectations, build customer loyalty, and achieve long-term success. To do so, it is suggested that organisations offering services should define and communicate clear service standards and expectations to employees (Maleyeff, 2022). Therefore, businesses should clearly articulate the desired service outcomes, performance metrics, and behaviours that align with the brand values and customer expectations; in line with this, they should also provide comprehensive training to employees and equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to deliver high-quality service. This would allow them to empower employees to make decisions and resolve customer issues promptly and effectively, fostering a customer-centric culture throughout the organisation.

At the same time, and on the other side of the coin of service delivery, organisations that deliver services should actively seek and listen to customer feedback through various channels, such as surveys, feedback forms, social media, and customer support interactions (Maleyeff, 2022). They could then use this feedback to identify areas for



improvement and take corrective actions to address customer concerns. They should also—it is argued—aim to foster a customer-centric culture and mindset throughout the organisation, encouraging employees to prioritise customer needs, understand their perspectives, and go the extra mile to deliver exceptional service. Besides, rewarding and recognising employees who consistently deliver high-quality service is also recommended.

Moreover, organisations that deliver services should implement a system for monitoring and measuring service performance (Maleyeff, 2022). Using key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to track and evaluate service quality, such as customer satisfaction scores, response times, service-level agreements, and customer retention rates, and regularly reviewing performance data and use it as a basis for improvement initiatives, can help in such efforts. At the same time, it is suggested that organisations establish quality assurance programmes to ensure consistency and adherence to service standards, and that they conduct regular audits, inspections, and evaluations to identify areas of improvement and address any deviations from desired service levels.

Along the same lines, such organisations should aim to foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and enhancing service processes (Maleyeff, 2022). This would allow them to encourage employees to provide suggestions for improvement and implement their ideas where appropriate. When possible, these organisations could also embrace innovation and leverage technology to streamline processes, reduce errors, and enhance efficiency.

It is worth acknowledging, as we said above, that, despite best efforts, service failures may occur. As such, organisations should develop a robust service recovery process to address customer complaints and resolve issues promptly, empower frontline employees to handle service recovery situations effectively, and provide appropriate compensation or remedies when necessary (Maleyeff, 2022).

On the other side of outcomes, it is suggested that organisations should recognise and celebrate successes in service quality to motivate and inspire employees; as such, they should highlight examples of outstanding service and share positive customer feedback to reinforce a culture of excellence and customer focus.

Taking these principles in the world of sport would therefore allow us to examine strategies for managing service quality in sports events, as we do so below.

Managing service quality is crucial for businesses to:

- **Can meet customer expectations.**



- **Can build customer loyalty.**
- **Can achieve long-term success.**
- Can achieve short-term success.

Unit 1.4 Managing service quality in sport events

As expected through our above analysis in viewing sport events as services, managing service quality in sport events is crucial to providing an exceptional experience for attendees. Therefore, it is recommended that sport event, league, and competition organisers should follow similar advice and thoroughly plan all aspects of the event, including logistics, ticketing, staffing, security, and facilities, to prepare and anticipate potential challenges and develop contingency plans to ensure a smooth execution.

Similarly to what we discussed above, sport event, league, and competition organisers should provide comprehensive training to event staff, including ushers, security personnel, ticketing staff, and customer service representatives (Buswell *et al.*, 2016). The organisations should train their staff well on customer service skills, event knowledge, emergency procedures, and handling challenging situations.

At the same time, sport event, league, and competition organisers should ensure that the venue and facilities meet high standards of cleanliness, comfort, and accessibility (Buswell *et al.*, 2016). Regularly inspecting and maintaining facilities, including seating areas, restrooms, concessions, and parking, to provide a pleasant experience for attendees, is now a given in any sport event, league, or competition organised. As part of their efforts, sport event organisers should also ensure that they streamline entry and exit processes to minimise wait times and provide a smooth flow of attendees. Technology such as electronic ticketing or access control systems could be used to expedite entry while maintaining security measures.

Let us not forget that a recent example of service failure in sport events came from the insufficient planning and streamlining of entrance and exit to an event. In May 2022, the UEFA Champions League final in Paris between Liverpool and Real Madrid was delayed by 30 minutes, after thousands of fans faced issues when entering the stadium (Bonn, 2023). These fans were unable to enter the Stade de France due to logistical issues at various stadium entry points, resulting in a long battle between the different parties involved (i.e., UEFA, fans, police, local organising committee) to identify what went wrong and how they could avoid it next time. It is worth noting that the final report put the blame on the event organisers for poor service planning and delivery.



The following images show not only the chaos that occurred with clearly displeased fans who had purchased tickets to the event being left out, but also the tangible repercussions on the service to be delivered, aka the UCL final which was delayed.

Figure 1. Service failure in the 2022 Champions League final



Source: [untitled image of service failure in the 2022 Champions League final], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3EDckQv>.

The above-mentioned example allows us to highlight the importance of the following point proposed: sport event, league, or competition organisers should maintain clear and consistent communication with attendees before, during, and after the event, to provide information on event schedules, parking instructions, prohibited items, and any changes or updates through various channels, such as websites, mobile apps, social media, and email (Buswell *et al.*, 2016).

Beyond the avoidance of service failure, sport event, league, and competition organisers should also engage with their customers to create opportunities for fan engagement and interaction throughout the event (Buswell *et al.*, 2016). This can include pre-game activities, halftime entertainment, interactive displays, contests, and opportunities to meet athletes or obtain autographs. By fostering a lively and engaging atmosphere that connects fans to the event and enhances their experience, sport event, competition and league organisers can significantly improve the strategic management of their events.

An important element to this is also the availability of a variety of food and beverage options that cater to different preferences and dietary requirements, as well as the robust safety and security measures to protect attendees and maintain a secure environment.

For the service of a sport event to be managed strategically, sport event, competition and league organisers should actively seek feedback from attendees through surveys, comment boxes, or online platforms, and then analyse the feedback and identify areas for improvement (Buswell *et al.*, 2016). By maintaining communication with attendees after the event to gather feedback, express gratitude, and address any post-event inquiries or concerns, they can then demonstrate a commitment to ongoing improvement and foster a positive relationship with attendees.

The first step in achieving this is to understand customer expectations and how they are shaped regarding sport events.

Unit 1.5 Customer expectations in sport events

Customer expectations refer to the desires, needs, and requirements that customers have regarding a product, service, or overall experience. Existing academic studies on the matter suggest that customer expectations would most commonly include the aspects presented in the following figure.

Figure 2. Most expressed customer expectations



Source: own source based on Schneider and White, 2004.

While the aspects above summarise the most expressed customer expectations, it is worth bringing theory into practice and thus examining here what customer expectations are in the case of sport events.

Customer expectations in sport events can vary depending on the specific context, the type of sport, and the audience demographic. However, in general terms, we can assume that sports fans expect to witness thrilling and competitive performances from athletes or teams. Therefore, they look forward to intense competition, skilful displays, and engaging contests that keep them entertained and emotionally invested in the event (Masterman, 2021). While this aspect is not manageable or even related to the strategic management of the sport event, competition, or league, there are other key aspects that we need to understand when it comes to customer expectations.

For example, we can be certain that customers expect sports venues to provide excellent facilities that enhance their experience (Masterman, 2021). This includes comfortable seating, clean restrooms, well-maintained facilities, and easy access to amenities like concessions, merchandise shops, and parking areas. We can also argue that customers expect a safe and secure environment when attending sport events. They rely on event organisers to implement robust security measures, crowd control, and emergency protocols to ensure their well-being throughout the event, as it was argued above.

Customers would also expect a fair and accessible ticketing process that allows them to purchase tickets conveniently; they also expect appropriate seating arrangements, including options for disabled fans, and clear communication regarding seating categories, view quality, and ticket prices. We could also suggest that customers expect smooth event organisation and logistics (Masterman, 2021), which includes timely scheduling of matches or events, clear communication of start times and updates, efficient queuing systems, and minimal disruptions during the event.

The above-mentioned example of the UCL final in Paris allows us to, once again, consider how it was the lack of appropriate planning that led to the issues that emerged, going against customer expectations, with similar examples unfortunately emerging from the world of sport often. Case in point, in the same summer, the Commonwealth Games of 2022, held in Birmingham, England, saw once again long queues to enter events, causing anger among fans (Horner and Reynolds, 2022). While the issue was quickly met with an apology, unlike the case with the UCL, it nevertheless highlights the lack of planning and understanding of customer expectations on behalf of the event organisers.

Another example of how customer expectations in sport events matter is when we consider the provision of options for disabled fans attending sport events. A recent survey (2022) on such fans found an increase since the previous year (2021) in the proportion of disabled fans experiencing barriers, including physical access to stadia (an increase from 31.5% to 36.5%), difficulty purchasing tickets (up from 17% to 24%) and a lack of information (a rise from 11% to 16%) (Level Playing Field, 2022).

This unfortunate finding allows us to suggest that sport event, competition, and league organisers should understand, appreciate, and better respond to customer expectations, to better improve their service delivery moving forward.

At the same time, and to provide a balanced account of both areas in need of improvement and areas in which we have already seen notable innovations and advancements in sport events, a growing trend noted is the provision of facilities and services for blind supporters to experience a sport event atmosphere, through an appropriate system that narrates the match and its progression to them while they are in



the stadium. Examples of this have been seen in several sport events around the world, such as in the ones organised by the football clubs PSV Eindhoven, which participates in the German league Bundesliga (Of Headbands and Heartbreak, n. d.), and Bohemians FC (participating in the Premier Division of the League of Ireland) in partnership with the National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI) (Neogi, 2019). The well-praised efforts to respond to customer expectations of both clubs are pictured below.

Figure 3. Visually impaired fans of PSV Eindhoven enjoying the football match experience



Source: [untitled image of visually impaired fans of PSV Eindhoven enjoying the football match experience], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3sKQnw7>.

Figure 4. Visually impaired fan of Bohemians FC enjoying the football match experience



Source: [untitled image of visually impaired fan of Bohemians FC enjoying the football match experience], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/4506rft>.

An additional thing to consider is that sports fans seek memorable experiences that go beyond the game itself. This can include pre-game entertainment, half-time shows, post-game celebrations, or special events that add value and create lasting memories, which can be prepared and executed by the sport event, competition, and league organisers (Masterman, 2021). This could, in turn, assist in creating and enhancing, in whichever way possible, an engaging atmosphere in sport events. Since fans want to feel the energy, enthusiasm, and camaraderie among fellow fans, sport events, competitions, and leagues could aim at creating such opportunities by initiating fan chants, including music, visual displays, and interactive activities that create an immersive experience. An additional thing to consider could be creating opportunities for interaction with players or athletes and the fans. Many sports fans desire opportunities to interact with players or athletes, whether through autograph sessions, meet-and-greet events, or fan engagement activities, since this creates a sense of connection and personal involvement with the sport and its participants. Creating such opportunities could therefore align with fans/customer expectations.

North American sports are notable for their efforts to listen and respond to customer expectations. As such, they have already invested resources in time, money, and efforts to ensure that entertainment beyond the sport event occurs. For example, music and visual displays can be found in stadia, with pre-match and half-time shows already established (Masterman, 2021). The most notable example of entertainment provided to fans would be the notorious half-time entertainment prepared for various sport events, even on a weekly basis on matches organised for league games, such as the NBA (Cacciola, 2021). With the most notorious being, of course, the Super Bowl half-time entertainment show, in which global superstar singers perform, half-time shows have been long embedded in the culture of North American sports, responding to the expectations of the fans, and involving various shows, such as singing, dancing, acrobatics, competitions for the fans, etc.

Figure 5. Half-time entertainment in NBA matches



Source: [untitled image of half-time entertainment in NBA matches], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3RDS4pR>.

In contrast, in European sport events, leagues, and competitions, such entertainment efforts are rarer, with recent examples nevertheless suggesting a notable improvement. For example, before a recent match between the national teams of Italy and England, fans were welcomed with a multimedia display to accompany the new brand theme of the Italian team and its mascot (Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, 2023). As the photograph below shows, the impressive show was welcomed by the fans attending the match.

Figure 6. The multimedia display organised by the Italian Football Association before the national team's match against England



Source: Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3PBEPsh>.

Finally, non-attending fans would also expect high-quality broadcasting and media coverage; they want access to comprehensive and accurate commentary, analysis, and replays through television broadcasts, online streaming platforms, or radio coverage, something that sport event, league, and competition organisers need to consider (Masterman, 2021). Not forgetting non-attending fans is also key, since they represent fans who might be convinced to attend future events, and, as such, their expectations should also be contemplated.

Above, we have already discussed some of the most common customer expectations in sport events; now, it is important to notice that a thorough understanding of customer expectations should be attempted by all sport event, league, or competition organisers, to ensure that accurate and detailed insight is provided on this important issue. How to gain such an understanding will be discussed below.

Customer expectations refer to _____ that customers have regarding a product, service or overall experience.

Answer: desires, needs and requirements.

Unit 1.6 Understanding customer expectations in sport events

As it becomes evident through our analysis above, understanding customer expectations requires a proactive and customer-centric approach. It is suggested that several different strategies can be adopted by sport event, leagues, or competition organisers to help them gain a better understanding of customer expectations. The first step in doing so would entail to regularly engage in open and two-way communication with their customers (Chelladurai, 2014).

By encouraging customers to provide feedback, share their experiences, and express their expectations through different channels, such as surveys, feedback forms, social media, and customer support interactions, organisations can gather valuable insights and use them moving forward.

Progressing this further, organisations can keep track of customer interactions across various touchpoints, including sales, customer support, and online platforms, and then analyse customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback, to identify patterns and recurring issues that can shed light on customer expectations. Monitoring social media platforms, online forums, and review sites to gain insights into customer conversations and sentiments could also be conducted, since social listening can help an organisation understand customer expectations, identify emerging trends, and address issues promptly (Chelladurai, 2014).

A more organised effort could also be to conduct market research to gather insights into customer preferences, needs, and expectations (Chelladurai, 2014). More sophisticated methods could be used at this point, such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, and data analysis, to understand customer behaviour, trends, and expectations within the existing customers. Such an organised effort, which might require assistance from external agencies, could help an event organiser also stay informed about industry trends, advancements, and innovations. This knowledge could then allow them to anticipate and adapt to evolving customer expectations. A similar type of research could also benchmark an event organiser's competitors and industry leaders to understand the standard of customer expectations within the same league, event category, or competition level.



Through this analysis, the organisation can understand its own customer experiences, strategies, and practices to identify areas where it can improve and differentiate from other companies.

After all, by understanding customer expectations, continuously gathering feedback, monitoring market dynamics, and adapting strategies to align with evolving customer needs and preferences, event organisers can achieve the aspects summarised in the following figure.

Figure 7. The outcomes of understanding customer expectations



Source: own source based on Chelladurai, 2014, and Maleyeff, 2022.

The first element included in the list above, which is the most important or closely related outcome of understanding customer expectations and satisfaction, will be discussed below.

Unit 1.7 Customer satisfaction in sport events

Customer satisfaction in sport events refers to the measurement of how satisfied attendees are with their overall experience at the event; their experience and overall satisfaction depend on numerous factors that we will discuss here, which represent the



customer expectations when met. We will therefore conduct the following analysis by focusing on the practical aspects and examples in which customer expectations were met, and thus resulted in customer satisfaction, as well as on managerial recommendations to achieve them.

Firstly, as we argued above, attendees assess the overall atmosphere of the event, including the energy, excitement, and engagement from fellow fans, stadium staff, and event organisers. Unsurprisingly, a positive and vibrant atmosphere contributes to higher customer satisfaction (Maleyeff, 2022). While the behaviour of the fans can only indirectly be influenced by the event organisers through appropriate communication and pricing decisions in terms of the selling of tickets, improving the excitement of the environment through music and multimedia aids can also be directly influenced by the event organisers and indeed add to the overall customer satisfaction.

The entertainment provided during the event, including half-time shows, fan competitions, interactive activities, and engagement opportunities with athletes or team mascots, can significantly impact on customer satisfaction (Masterman, 2021). Attendees expect engaging experiences that create lasting memories, such as the interaction with a team mascot, for example, a phenomenon often encountered in sport events in Northern American sports. In this case, a mascot can greatly contribute to the overall atmosphere of the event, by inviting fans to cheer, initiating dances, engaging directly with fans, and overall generating excitement and energy (Greer, 2017).

Figure 8. NBA team Utah Jazz's mascot inviting fans to cheer



Source: Greer, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3ZgwXeI>.

In the figure above, NBA team Utah Jazz's mascot invites fans to cheer and 'Prove we are the loudest fans' as the sign he is holding says.

Similarly, and as we discussed above, the quality of the venue facilities, including seating comfort, cleanliness, accessibility, and amenities, plays a significant role in customer satisfaction. Well-maintained facilities that meet the needs and expectations of attendees contribute to a positive experience, while the opposite would undoubtedly negatively affect them (Buswell *et al.*, 2016). As a result, event organisers should ensure that facilities are always up to standard and updated when possible. This, as we argued above, should be paired with excellent logistics, crowd management, safety, clear communication, and customer service, all of which can be directly managed by the event organisers.

An element recently added to customer expectations, and accordingly in customer satisfaction, is related to food and beverage services. Recent research has highlighted that the quality, variety, and pricing of food and beverage options available at the event impact on customer satisfaction, since attendees appreciate having access to diverse and high-quality options that meet their preferences and are reasonably priced (Piggin *et al.*, 2019). Some questions have been raised on the pricing of the food and beverages offered; for example, English Premier League clubs have often been criticised for the prices set for their offerings (Bishop, 2022). In this respect, an additional aspect to consider is, indeed, the types of offerings available.

In practice, it is due to public demand that we have seen major sport event, league, or competition organisers, such as the International Olympic Committee and the local organising committees of the Games, promote healthy offerings and indeed stress their commitment to offering fruit and vegetables during the events (Rio 2016 Organising Committee, 2014). The relevant policy issued for the 2016 Rio Games by the organising committee can highlight this point, just by examining the cover page in which fruit is prominently shown (see below).

Figure 9. Rio 2016 Taste of the Games cover



Source: Rio 2016 Organising Committee, 2014, <https://bit.ly/48fIpeD>.

The cover of the Rio 2016 Taste of the Game represents the food and beverages policy for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Another aspect to consider in the current economic climate is the value for money that attendees will receive. Simply put, at the end of the event, attendees evaluate whether they perceive the event as providing value for the price they paid. In doing so, they consider factors such as ticket prices, seating quality, entertainment value, and overall experience, to determine if they feel the event was worth their investment. Therefore, event organisers should make sure that they evaluate the quality of the facilities, the entertainment offered, and the wider experience when deciding the pricing strategy adopted (Shapiro *et al.*, 2016).

Finally, we should acknowledge that customer satisfaction in sport events is reflected in attendees' overall experience and their likelihood to recommend the event to others. Positive experiences and high levels of satisfaction contribute to positive word-of-mouth, increasing the event's reputation and attracting future attendees. This, in turn, highlights the importance sport event, league, or competition organisers should place on measuring and accessing customer satisfaction, something that we will discuss next.

Unit 1.8 Measuring customer satisfaction in sport events

Numerous methods have been proposed that would allow sport event, league, or competition organisers to gather feedback and assess customers' perceptions and experiences, to measure customer satisfaction. These, according to Maleyeff (2022), include the following aspects:

- **Surveys.** They are a popular and effective way to collect feedback from customers. This can be done through online surveys, email surveys, or paper-based surveys. The survey questions can cover various aspects of the customer experience, such as overall satisfaction, specific service interactions, product quality, and areas for improvement. Likert scale ratings, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions can be used to gather quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Net Promoter Score (NPS).** It is a simple and widely used metric to measure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers are asked to rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how likely they are to recommend the product or service to others. Based on their responses, customers are classified into three groups: promoters (9-10), passives (7-8), and detractors (0-6). The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.
- **Customer interviews and focus groups.** Conducting in-depth interviews or focus groups with a selected sample of customers allows for more detailed insights and qualitative feedback. These methods provide an opportunity for customers to express their opinions, share experiences, and provide suggestions for improvement.
- **Online reviews, feedback, and social media listening.** Monitoring and analysing online reviews, ratings, and feedback on platforms, such as review websites, social media, and online forums, can provide valuable insights into customer satisfaction and their overall sentiment towards the event. It is important to actively monitor and respond to customer reviews and participate in social media conversations to address any concerns and demonstrate a commitment to customer satisfaction.
- **Customer complaints and support interactions.** Tracking and analysing customer complaints and support interactions can provide insights into areas of dissatisfaction and opportunities for improvement. Analysing the nature of complaints, response times, resolution rates, and customer feedback during support interactions can help identify trends and areas for improvement.



- **Customer loyalty and repeat business.** Assessing customer loyalty and repeat business is an indirect measure of customer satisfaction. Tracking metrics such as customer retention rate, repeat purchase rate, and customer lifetime value can provide an indication of customer satisfaction levels, especially when combined with other tools such as social media listening.
- **Customer Effort Score (CES).** It measures the ease of the customer's experience when interacting with a company. Customers are asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how easy it was to resolve their issue or achieve their goal, thus indicating potentially their satisfaction.

Summary

In this first module of the Managing Service Quality in Sport Events course, we focused on customer expectations and customer satisfaction, two key concepts in service quality. First, we discussed sport events as services and the importance of managing service quality. We then focused on customer expectations in sport events, on their importance, and on how we can understand them. Finally, we moved into the analysis of a direct outcome of meeting customer expectations: customer satisfaction in sport events, how it can be achieved by event organisers, and how it can be measured.

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