

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AND THE SERVICESCAPE

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Physical Evidence

- Effective design of physical, tangible evidence is important for closing provider gap 2.
- Elements of physical evidence include all aspects of the organization's physical facility (servicescape) as well as other forms of tangible communication

Provider Gap 2

CUSTOMER

COMPANY

Customer-Driven
Service Designs and
Standards

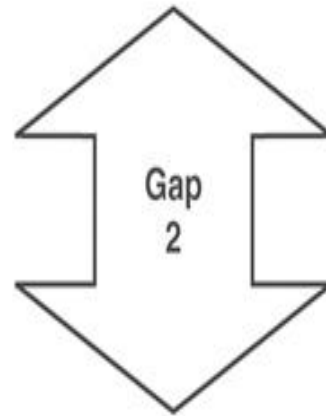
Company
Perceptions of
Consumer
Expectations

↑ Gap 2: The Design and Standards
↓ Gap

Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 2

FIGURE 2.3

Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 2: The Service Design and Standards Gap



Customer-driven service designs and standards

- **Poor service design**

- Unsystematic new service development process
- Vague, undefined service designs
- Failure to connect service design to service positioning

- **Absence of customer-driven standards**

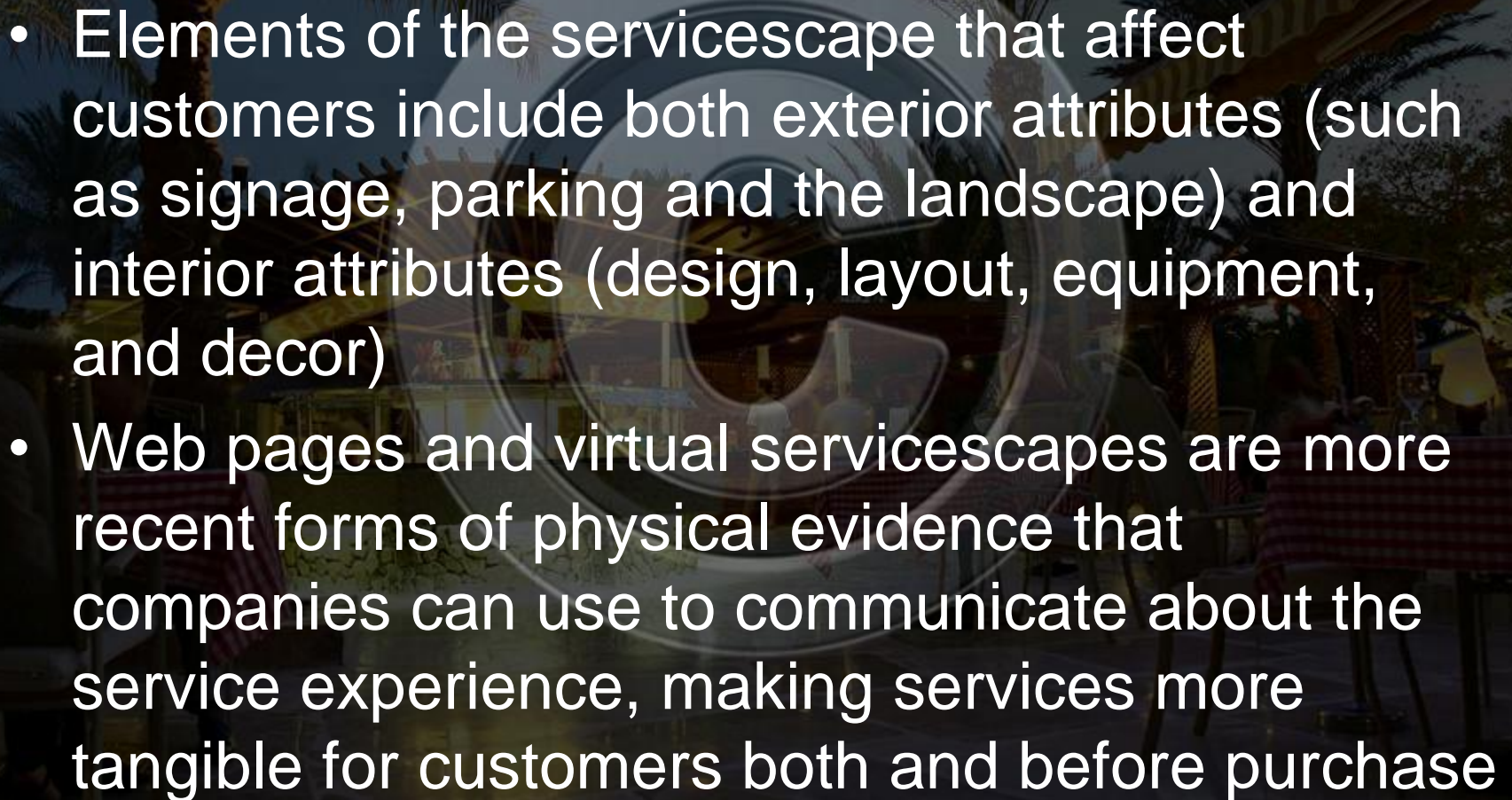
- Lack of customer-driven service standards
- Absence of process management to focus on customer requirements
- Absence of formal process for setting service quality goals

- **Inappropriate physical evidence and servicescape**

- Failure to develop tangibles in line with customer expectations
- Servicescape design that does not meet customer and employee needs
- Inadequate maintenance and updating of the servicescape

Management perceptions of customer expectations



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- A photograph of an outdoor restaurant at night. The scene is illuminated by warm lights. In the foreground, a large, circular, metallic-looking sign is partially visible, featuring a stylized logo. The background shows a restaurant with a prominent sign that says "Pasta". There are several tables with red and white checkered tablecloths, and people are seated at them. The restaurant has a modern, open-air design with a large, curved roof structure. The overall atmosphere is cozy and inviting.
- Elements of the servicescape that affect customers include both exterior attributes (such as signage, parking and the landscape) and interior attributes (design, layout, equipment, and decor)
 - Web pages and virtual servicescapes are more recent forms of physical evidence that companies can use to communicate about the service experience, making services more tangible for customers both and before purchase

Elements of Physical Evidence

TABLE 11.1
Elements of Physical Evidence

Servicescape

- Facility exterior
 - Exterior design
 - Signage
 - Parking
 - Landscape
 - Surrounding environment
- Facility interior
 - Interior design
 - Equipment
 - Signage
 - Layout
 - Air quality/temperature
 - Sound/music/scent/lighting

Other Tangibles

- Business cards
- Stationery
- Billing statements
- Reports
- Employee dress
- Uniforms
- Brochures
- Web pages
- Virtual servicescape

Examples of Physical Evidence from the Customer's Point of View

TABLE 11.2
Examples of
Physical Evidence
from the Customer's
Point of View

Service	Physical Evidence	
	Servicescape	Other Tangibles
Insurance	Not applicable	Policy itself Billing statements Periodic updates Company brochure Letters/cards Claims forms Website
Hospital	Building exterior Parking Signs Waiting areas Admissions office Patient care room Medical equipment Recovery room	Uniforms Reports/stationery Billing statements Website
Airline	Airline gate area Airplane exterior Airplane interior (decor, seats, air quality) Check-in kiosks Security screening area	Tickets Food Uniforms Website
Express mail	Free-standing stores Package drop boxes	Packaging Trucks Uniforms Handheld devices Website
Sporting event	Parking Stadium exterior Ticketing area Entrance Seating Restrooms Concession areas Playing field Scoreboard	Tickets Employee uniforms Programs Team mascot Website

Typology of Service Organizations Based on Form and Use of the Servicescape

TABLE 11.3
Typology of Service Organizations Based on Variations in Form and Use of the Servicescape

Source: From M. J. Bitner, "Servicescapes: The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees," *Journal of Marketing* 56 (April 1992), pp. 57–71. Reprinted with permission of the American Marketing Association.

Servicescape Usage	Complexity of the Servicescape	
	Elaborate	Lean
Self-service (customer only)	Water park eBay	ATM Car wash Simple Internet services Express mail drop box
Interpersonal services (both customer and employee)	Hotel Restaurant Health clinic Hospital Bank Airline School	Dry cleaner Retail cart Hair salon
Remote service (employee only)	Telecommunications Insurance company Utility Many professional services	Telephone mail-order desk Automated voice-messaging services

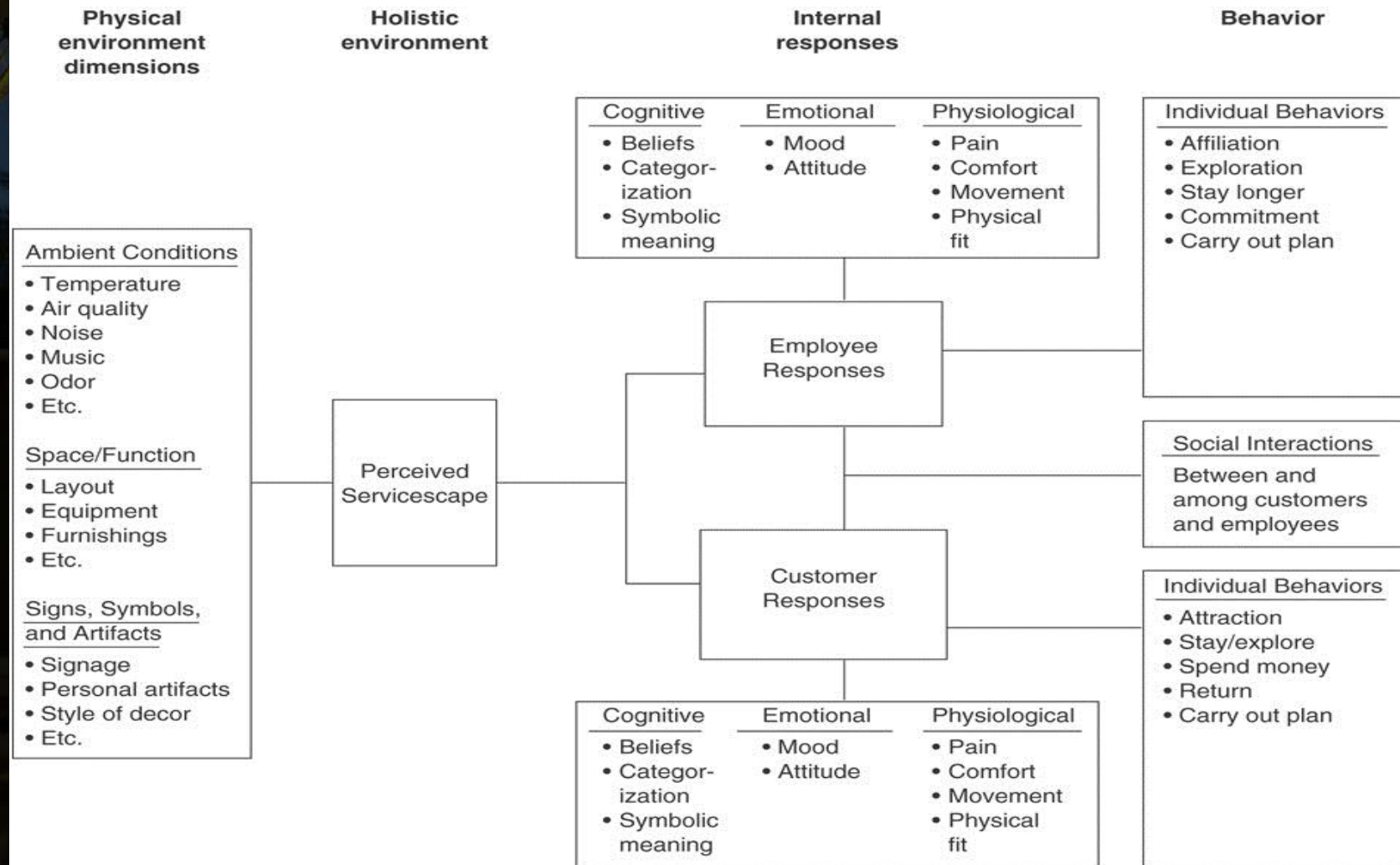
Roles of the Servicescape

- **Package**
 - conveys expectations
 - influences perceptions
- **Facilitator**
 - facilitates the flow of the service delivery process
 - provides information (how am I to act?)
 - facilitates the ordering process (how does this work?)
 - facilitates service delivery
- **Socializer**
 - facilitates interaction between:
 - customers and employees
 - customers and fellow customers
- **Differentiator**
 - sets provider apart from competition in the mind of the consumer

A Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships in Service Organizations

FIGURE 11.1 A Framework for Understanding Environment–User Relationships in Service Organizations

Source: Adapted from M. J. Bitner, “Servicescapes: The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees,” *Journal of Marketing* 56 (April 1992), pp. 57–71.



Guidelines for Physical Evidence Strategy

- Recognize the strategic impact of physical evidence.
- Blueprint the physical evidence of service.
- Clarify strategic roles of the servicescape.
- Assess and identify physical evidence opportunities.
- Be prepared to update and modernize the evidence.

Cheers: The Third Place



The Cheers bar epitomized a third place in the well-known television show.

Some Tangible Cues and/or Facilitating Goods at Buffalo Wild Wings Restaurant



Cup with BW3 logo...



NTN system trivia game pad where customers can compete with fellow restaurant patrons and others playing it all around the country.



Special Promotions...



The menu...



The pager to let you know when your food is ready...

In class assignments

- Think of a particular service organization for which you believe physical evidence is particularly important in communicating with and satisfying customers. Prepare the text of a presentation you would give to the manager of that organization to convince him or her of the importance of physical evidence in the organization's marketing strategy

In class assignments

- Visit the websites of several service providers. Does the physical evidence of the website portray an image consistent with other forms of evidence provided by the organization?