

Concept

Service evidence

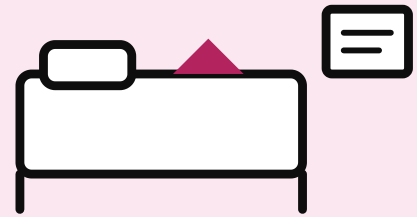
The objects, spaces and messages that make a service visible, since the service itself is intangible, and that people use to judge its quality.

In Spanish

Evidencia de servicio

Origin

Shostack (1977); on the physical setting, Bitner (1992)



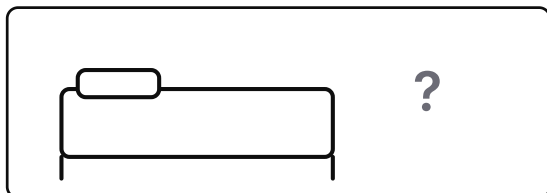
What problem it addresses

Explains why a good service can go unnoticed: if nothing shows it, the person doesn't know it happened.

An example

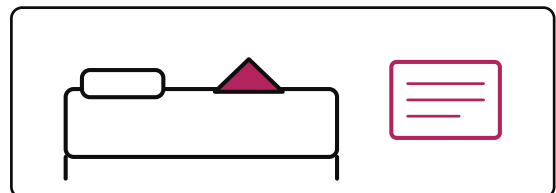
A hotel room that gets cleaned while the guest is out.

No evidence



The room is clean, but nothing shows it. **Did they clean it?**

With evidence



Folded towels and a note saying the room is ready. **The service shows.**

The work is the same; only what the person can see of it changes.

Why it happens



A service can't be touched or tried before using it.



The person looks for clues in what they can see: spaces, objects and messages.



Those clues shape their judgment of the service's quality.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Review each step of the service: what does the person see that proves something happened?

✗ Avoid

Piling on messages that add nothing: evidence should confirm something real.

👁 Don't fall for it

What happens backstage also needs a visible signal in the frontstage.

1992

What the research says

Mary Jo Bitner proposed a framework for studying how a service's physical setting influences the behavior of customers and employees (Bitner, 1992).

● ● ○ **Debated evidence.** It is a conceptual framework that organizes research from several disciplines, not a single experiment.

Connections

Used in

■ Service environment design

■ Retail design

■ Fan experience

■ Service blueprint

Related to

■ Frontstage and backstage

■ Service-dominant logic

■ Gaps model of service quality

■ Touchpoint

Authors and works

1977	G. Lynn Shostack	Argued that services need tangible evidence to be perceived.
1992	Mary Jo Bitner	Proposed a framework for how a service's physical setting influences customers and employees.

Sources

Original sources

- Shostack, G. L. (1977). Breaking free from product marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 41(2), 73–80. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297704100219\)](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224297704100219)
- Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 57–71. [View source \(https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600205\)](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600205)

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