

ENTERPRISE SERVICE MODELING

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Weaknesses and Potential Failures

In a car rental business, it is essential to have a website. The Internet and the World Wide Web have enabled customers around the globe with greater flexibility and easy access to information. Most consumers turn to Google's search engine for information and knowledge on products and services. A car rental website will allow the people to search availabilities and access answers to inquiries (FAQ's) which can effectively extend the hours of operation. Although a website is necessary to reach out to the 21st century customers, it can have a weakness as well. A potential failure of the car rental website is the delay of the online reservation process due to overloaded web server. When thousands or even millions of potential clients are connecting to the company's website in a short interval or simultaneously, it can definitely cause a delay in the server. Although many companies often use anti-load techniques to manage network traffic, there can always be a potential failure in the network. This delay can be a great threat to the company's reputation and customer loyalty as frustration may drive the customers away from the website. With so many other competing car rental businesses, frustrated customers will end up finding another car rental website which can cause a decrease in numbers for the company's income. If the issue of server overload is not immediately fixed and continues to repeat, it can have very negative impact on the company's reputation. If the problem is not resolved right away, the company can be perceived as non-professionals who do not meet the standards of customer service.

Another weakness in this particular car rental service is that it does not deliver cars to the location of the customers. Instead, customers are required to collect the rental car at the rental location. Customers have to make the time to travel to the rental site, which can significantly affect and disturb their day's schedule. Additionally, the cars must also be returned to the same location, which has the same type of disadvantage. To the 21st century consumers, customer service is extremely important and therefore this can be a big disadvantage and a weakness to the business. Disappointment and frustration from the service may lead our 21st century consumers to expose the company in a negative light via social media websites like Facebook or Twitter. The fact that our customers are greatly influential by the use of social media, a place where they express their likes, experiences and feelings, discouraging them can be a great risk to the company's reputation. In order to extend customer loyalty and enhance customer satisfaction, the car rental business should take into consideration setting up multiple car pick up/ drop off locations rather than having all the cars rented out from the same rental site. By building these locations in different sections of the neighborhood, it decreases the time traveled to the rental site and offers customers easier car rental service. By enhancing the customer's experience within the company, the service will get more exposure and more people will hear about it, as word of mouth marketing can be the best type of advertising.

While brainstorming about how the service might be improved to fulfill customer satisfaction, the service blueprinting technique made the process easier by providing our team with guidance and structure. The blueprinting process helped us create a visual depiction of the service process from a customer's perspective. Moreover, the visual representation of the steps in process, the points of interaction and the physical evidence present on site allowed the team to look at the service from not only a consumer's point of view but also from the perspectives of the operational team and other employees involved in the service. Additionally, the blueprinting technique helped our team identify failure points as well as areas for improvement. By examining the visual representation of the points of contact that place in a service, it naturally created an opportunity for the team to reflect and determine weaknesses and potential failures involved in the service. It also helped us when we would come across points of disagreement about how the service works.

Opportunities for Improvement

In the service blueprint model, our team focused on the correlation between customer actions and the structure of the system. If we treat back-end support processes as a something that is embedded in the structure, we can analyze the service for areas of improvement. Through researching national car services such as Enterprise, we have concluded that their service model's fundamental purpose is to create a convenient and easy experience for the customer in the shortest amount of time. Customer actions are defined by their end goals when seeking a product or service. Our blueprint model represented the customer's actions as a part of the process that must be defined before physical evidence can be provided. In this scenario, the blueprint acts as step-by-step guide into understanding how customers interact with the service and how the service could be improved. The majority of customers who use car rental services will have accessed their services online. The framework needed for an effective website would include a simple user-friendly design that will allow the user to work through the steps and reserve a car as soon as possible. From the user's end, the process would work like this:

Access website --> Choose Location --> Sign- In (Existing customer/previous users) --> Pick a time (for pickup and drop off) --> Choose a vehicle --> Make Payment --> Print Receipt (or digital copy)

The above process identifies the ideal system for a car rental website. Although support processes and visible actions were excluded, this process will assist us with identifying potential room for improvement. In Glushko and Tabas's article *Designing Service Systems* (2009) they examine the benefits and drawbacks of self-service systems and applications. They suggest that self-service systems are often used to complement in-person services rather than replace that

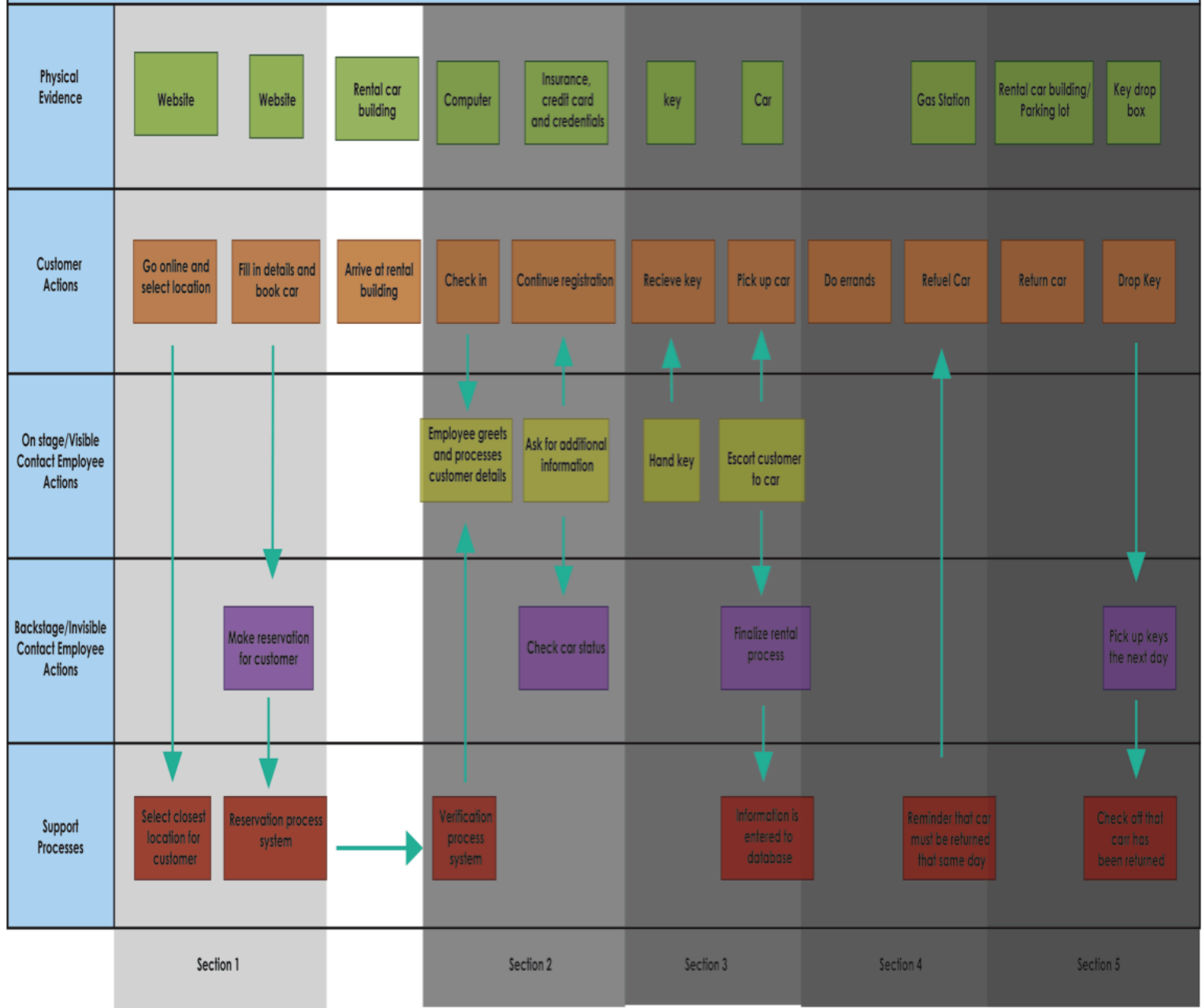
process (2009). For a car rental service, a self-service system has become an essential part of the process. As of now, an online service for car rentals would be primarily focused on the reservation portion of the transaction. What this means is that a customer will be able to access the website, pick a location and date, and search for a car of their choice. A possible opportunity for improvement in this portion of the process would be to include a streamlined service for repeat customers. A streamline process would enable the website to recognize the user through authorization, and allow them to book reservations based on previous rentals. From the user's perspective, they would be able to access the website, sign into their account and choose the same rental package they previously purchased. An example of this improved service is highlighted below:

Repeat customer access website --> Signs into account--> Website recognizes customers previous rental --> Provides customer with option to choose same rental package --> Proceed to checkout

Not only would this process provide an added convenience to loyal customers, but it would also reinforce how much their loyalty means to our brand. In addition to providing a streamlined service for existing customers, there is also an opportunity to provide a higher level of convenience to new customers. Glushko and Tabas state, "Customers are influenced by the extent of integration and consistency between two channels." (2009, p. 412). Defining channels as the integration between customer actions and back end processes will allow us to create a system that maximizes the potential between these channels. If the goal of our service is to get the customer in the car as quickly as possible then our systematic processes must provide as much convenience to the end user as possible. Similar to how banks are starting to implement a service where customers are able to take pictures of their checks, our car rental service could utilize a similar service where the customer is able to provide their driver's license and insurance online by taking a picture. This would allow the customer to decrease the amount of time spent dealing with a front-line service agent. A system that is focused on providing more convenience for the customers would reinforce the support processes and decrease the front line actions of employees.

The main problem with using the service blueprint model to represent our service is that it does not take into account problems between stages. As we focus on finding improvements for our service, the blueprint lacks the ability to identify the correlation between customer actions, front-end employee actions, and support processes. Without being able to distinguish these relationships, it is hard to understand the things that could go wrong with improving the consumer experience. Current car rental services offer varieties of loyalty accounts and business relationships but what the blueprint fails to illustrate is how improving a service could affect the entire target audience.

Blueprint for one day rental with Enterprise for a student



Section 1:

Here the customer goes online, to the car rental website (Enterprise). The customer searches for pick up location of his/her city. The website provides the available pickup locations nearest to the

customer. The customer then proceeds to fill in his/her information like name, age and driver's license information. The customer can then select a range of cars offered at set location. The information is sent and processed.

Section 2:

The customer arrives at the car rental place and checks in with the employee. The employee pulls up his/her file that was recorded when the customer made the reservation. After they verify the customer's reservation, the customer is then asked to give other information such as credit card and insurance number. While this is happening another employee is checking the status of the car that was reserved. Making sure it's in the lot, cleaned and ready to be rented out.

Section 3:

Once the registration process is done, the employee gives the keys to the customer and escorts him/her to the car. The employee explains to the customer about the car's features. At the same time, on the back end it is documented that the customer has left with the car.

Section 4:

Here the customer runs his/her errands. A reminder from the database will be sent to the customer that the car must be returned at the end of that day as noted in his contract. The customer then fills up the car.

Section 5:

The customer arrives back at the place where he rented the car. Since he has returned after the place has closed he drops the keys in drop off box. The next morning an employee picks up the keys and confirms that the customer has returned the car.

Works Cited

Glushko, R., & Tabas, L. (2009). Designing Service Systems By Bridging The “front Stage” And “back Stage”. *Information Systems and E-Business Management*, 407-427.