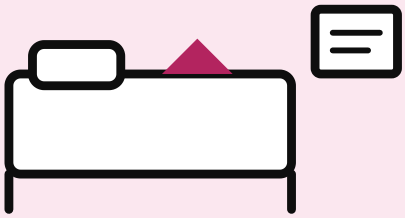
Concept

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)

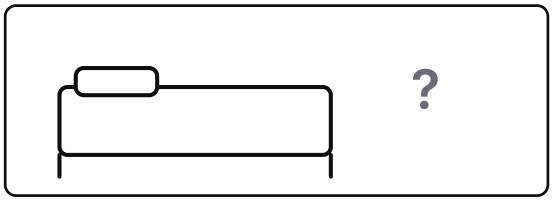
What problem it addresses

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

An example

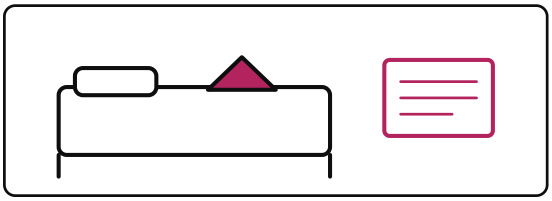
A hotel room that gets cleaned while the guest is out.

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.

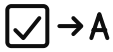
Why it happens

1 

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

2 

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

3 

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)
- 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)

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