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SECTION 2
SYLLABUS DESIGN

"Whatever you can do or think you can do, begin it.
Boldness has genius, magic and power in it."
-- Goethe

MANAGING THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Virtually all faculty use syllabi as a means of describing course content and objectives to students. However, it is likely that few give much thought to the kinds of messages these documents can communicate. This is particularly ironic in a services marketing course, where we teach students that managing the physical evidence of service (e.g., our syllabi) is extremely important. As Chapter 10 of the *Services Marketing* text points out, physical evidence is crucial in "communicating service quality attributes and creating the service experience." Physical evidence includes "any tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service," and it is particularly important in providing information about services that are high in credence or experience characteristics.

Educational services are highly intangible offerings. In fact, they are shown at the extreme right of the Tangibility Spectrum presented in Figure 1.2 of the *Services Marketing* text. This implies that they are high in credence and experience characteristics and thus are more difficult to evaluate than products that are dominated by tangible attributes. Students are very concerned with trying to predict the quality of their upcoming educational experiences at the beginning of each semester and they carefully scrutinize any available physical evidence (or search attributes) for clues. Syllabi take on great importance since they are among the first bits of tangible information that students get about teachers and courses. What is transmitted either intentionally or accidentally can have a dramatic effect on student behavior and classroom culture. (Remember that there is no second chance to make a good first impression—especially if your Services Marketing course is an elective!)

At best, your syllabus can clearly communicate your goals and objectives in language that is friendly, respectful, and understandable to students. It can be an excellent stimulus for a class discussion about your beliefs and expectations regarding individual and class behavior, and you can even facilitate greater course ownership by letting students participate in some aspects of syllabus design.

While syllabi can be very helpful in communicating course content and expectations, they can also work against you in unintended ways. The tone and structure of your syllabus can negatively affect your students' perceptions of you or your course. If your message does not match your underlying educational goals for your students, you may be providing inconsistent or incompatible physical evidence that will create confusion and mistrust as students try to figure out what you *really* expect from them. (In this case, you are actually widening Gap 4 in your own educational service delivery.) For example, if your syllabus is formal or condescending in tone or does not demonstrate that active learning is a valued part of the course content, it is very difficult to get students to fully participate in creating a collaborative or active learning environment.

As you design your syllabus, you may want to carefully consider all of the tangible cues that you are providing (in addition to the description of the course content) and use them in the most effective way to positively communicate with students. Possibilities include: 1) choice of wording and fonts; 2) visual appeal (e.g., adequate "white spaces" and color of paper); 3) personal touches (e.g., humor, clip art and quotes); and 4) clear but friendly statements of course objectives, performance expectations and class

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format. As mentioned above, you can also get students directly involved if you are willing to wait until the second class to pass out your syllabus. Students can work in small groups on the first day to vote on a color for "their" syllabus and to identify one "house rule" that they would like to see followed throughout the semester. The color selection votes and house rules can then be collected. When the syllabus is distributed during the next class period, your students will be very interested to see which syllabus color and house rules were selected.

Most of the syllabi listed in the tables that follow were designed for use with previous editions of the Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler text. However, with a couple of exceptions, the topics of the seventh edition of the textbook are the same as in previous editions. So, these syllabi should be useful resources for you as you design your services marketing course. Undergraduate syllabi are included in the first table, graduate syllabi in the second table. Each table lists distinct syllabi and identifies the instructor and his/her institution, the title of the class, and course length, and includes a hyperlink to a PDF version of the syllabus. That is, each syllabus listed in the tables below has been saved in PDF format on Dwayne Gremler's web site (www.gremler.net). You will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to open the PDF formatted files. (If you would like to add your syllabus to the list, send an e-mail message to Dwayne Gremler at gremler@bgsu.edu.)

SAMPLE UNDERGRADUATE SERVICES MARKETING SYLLABI

Instructor	Institution	Course Number	Course Title (Date)	Weeks (Sessions)	PDF and/or URL
James Barnes	Memorial University of Newfoundland	Business 6230*	Services Marketing (Fall 2007)	13 weeks (26 sessions)	• PDF
Mike Brady	Florida State University	MAR 4841	Services Marketing (Fall 2009)	15 weeks (30 sessions)	• PDF
Mark Colgate	University of Victoria	COM450	Services Marketing and Management (Spring 2005)	13 weeks (26 sessions)	• PDF
Dwayne Gremler	Bowling Green State University	MKT 4050	Services Marketing (Spring 2012)	15 weeks (30 sessions)	• PDF • URL
Kevin Gwinner	Kansas State University	MKTIB 546	Services Marketing (Fall 2010)	16 weeks (32 sessions)	• PDF
Michael Hartline	Florida State University	MAR 4841	Services Marketing (Fall 2010)	15 weeks (30 sessions)	• PDF
Matt Meuter	California State University at Chico	MKTG 478	Services Marketing (Fall 2011)	16 weeks (32 sessions)	• PDF
Amy Ostrom	Arizona State University	MKT 442	Services Marketing Strategy (Fall 2011)	16 weeks (16 sessions)	• PDF

*This course used the Canadian Edition by Zeithaml, Bitner, Gremler, Mahaffey, and Hiltz (2007) published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

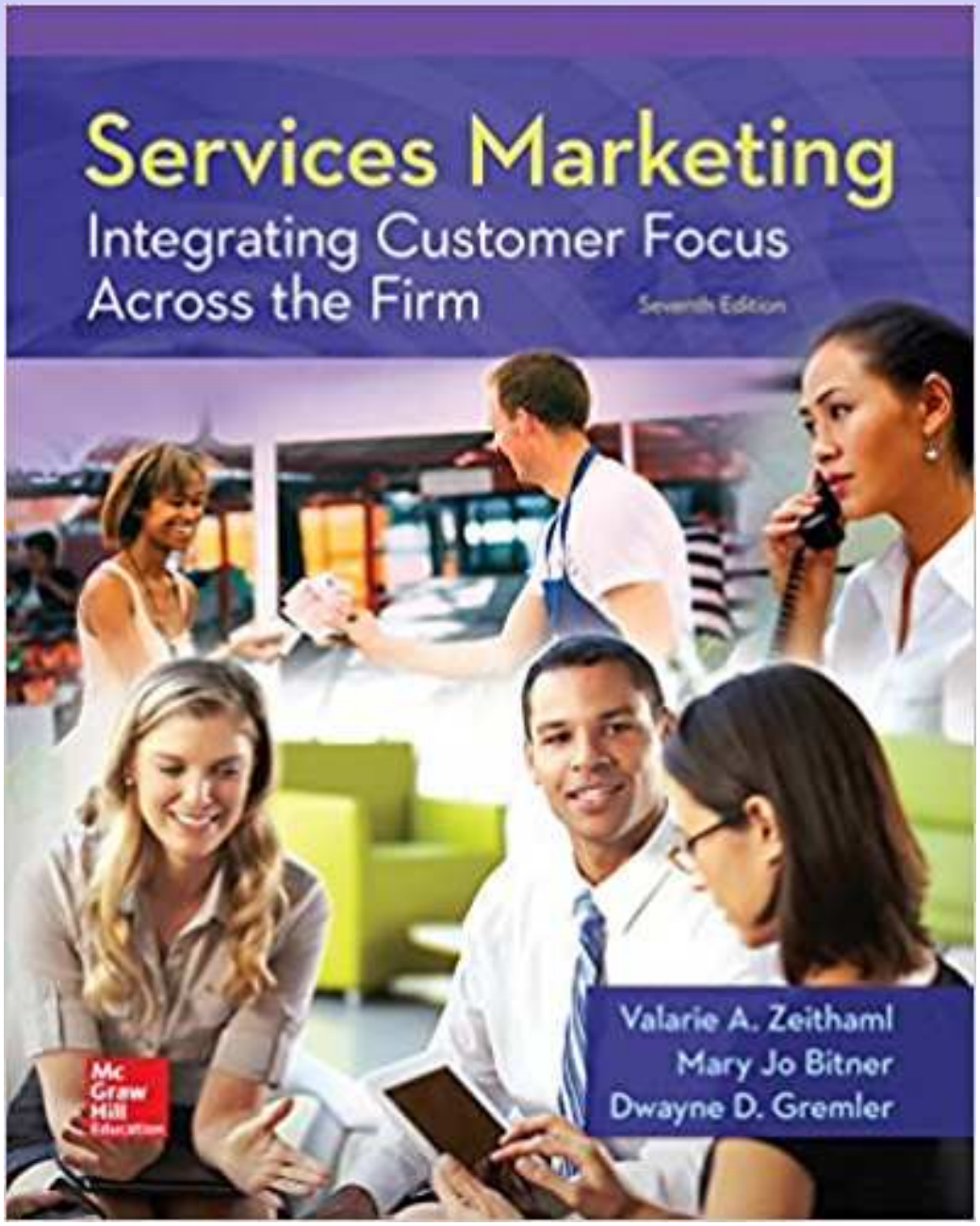
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SAMPLE GRADUATE SERVICES MARKETING SYLLABI

Instructor	Institution	Course Number	Course Title (Date)	Weeks (Sessions)	PDF and/or URL
Mary Jo Bitner	Arizona State University	MKT 591	Services Marketing and Management (Spring 2011)	8 weeks (16 sessions)	• PDF
Mary Jo Bitner	Arizona State University	MKT 591*	Excel at Service(s) (Fall 2007) (*Executive Course*)	4 days (16 sessions)	• PDF
Michael Bowers	Rollins College	MKT 607	Services Marketing (Spring 2012)	14 weeks (14 sessions)	• PDF
Dwayne Gremler	Bowling Green State University	MBA 642	Services Marketing Management (Summer 2007)	6 weeks (12 sessions)	• PDF
Susan Keaveney	University of Colorado at Denver	MKTG 6040	Services Marketing (Fall 2011)	15 weeks (15 sessions)	• PDF
Carolyn Massiah	University of Central Florida	MAR 6845	Services Marketing (Spring 2008)	15 weeks (15 sessions)	• PDF
Mark Rosenbaum	Northern Illinois University	Marketing 505	Introduction to Marketing: Focus on Services Marketing (Fall 2007) (*Executive Course*)	7 weeks (7 sessions)	• PDF
Janet Wagner	University of Maryland	BUMK 736	Service Marketing (Spring 2011)	7 weeks (7 sessions)	• PDF
Valarie Zeithaml	University of North Carolina	MBA 751	Services Marketing (Spring 2012)	7 weeks (14 sessions)	• PDF

*This course used a Chinese Edition of the text. This version is a Simplified Chinese translation edition of Zeithaml and Bitner's (2003) third edition of *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm*, jointly published by McGraw-Hill Education (Asia) Co. and China Machine Press.

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Conceptual Framework of the Book: The Gaps Model of Service Quality

Chapter 2

- The Customer Gap
- The Provider Gaps:
  - Gap 1 – The Listening Gap
    - not knowing what customers expect
  - Gap 2 – The Service Design and Standards Gap
    - not having the right service designs and standards
  - Gap 3 – The Service Performance Gap
    - not delivering to service standards
  - Gap 4 – The Communication Gap
    - not matching performance to promises
- Putting It All Together: Closing the Gaps

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Objectives for Chapter 2: The Gaps Model of Service Quality

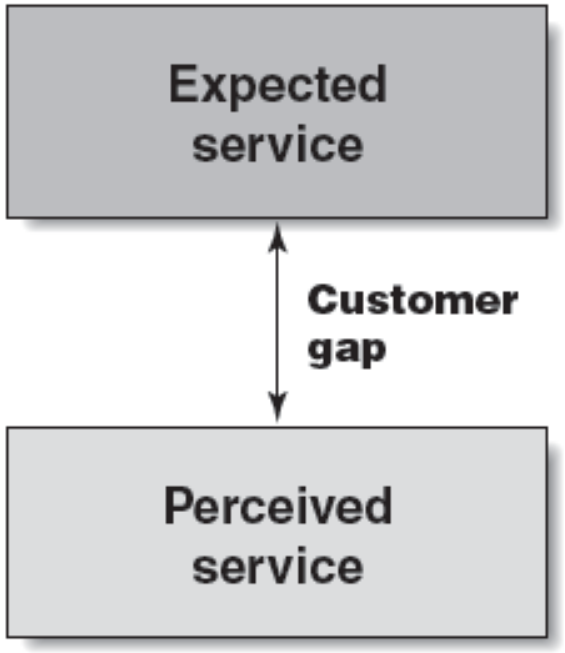
- Introduce the framework, called the gaps model of service quality, used to organize this textbook.
- Demonstrate that the gaps model is a useful framework for understanding service quality in an organization.
- Demonstrate that the most critical service quality gap to close is the customer gap, the difference between customer expectations and perceptions.
- Show that four gaps that occur in companies, which we call provider gaps, are responsible for the customer gap.
- Identify the factors responsible for each of the four provider gaps.

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The Customer Gap

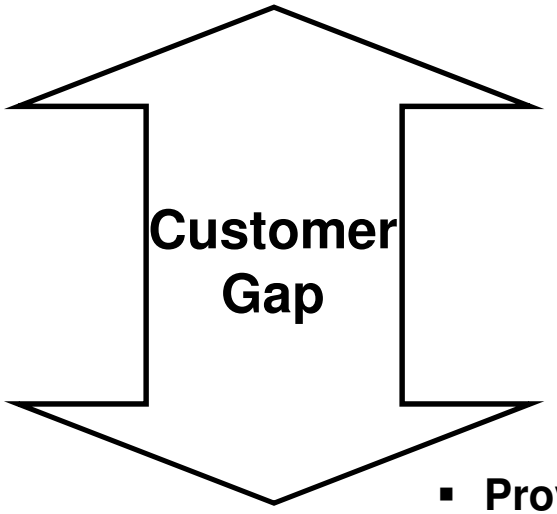
FIGURE 2.1
The Customer Gap



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Key Factors Leading to the Customer Gap



Customer Expectations

- **Provider Gap 1:** Not knowing what customers expect
- **Provider Gap 2:** Not having the right service designs and standards
- **Provider Gap 3:** Not delivering to service standards
- **Provider Gap 4:** Not matching performance to promises

Customer Perceptions

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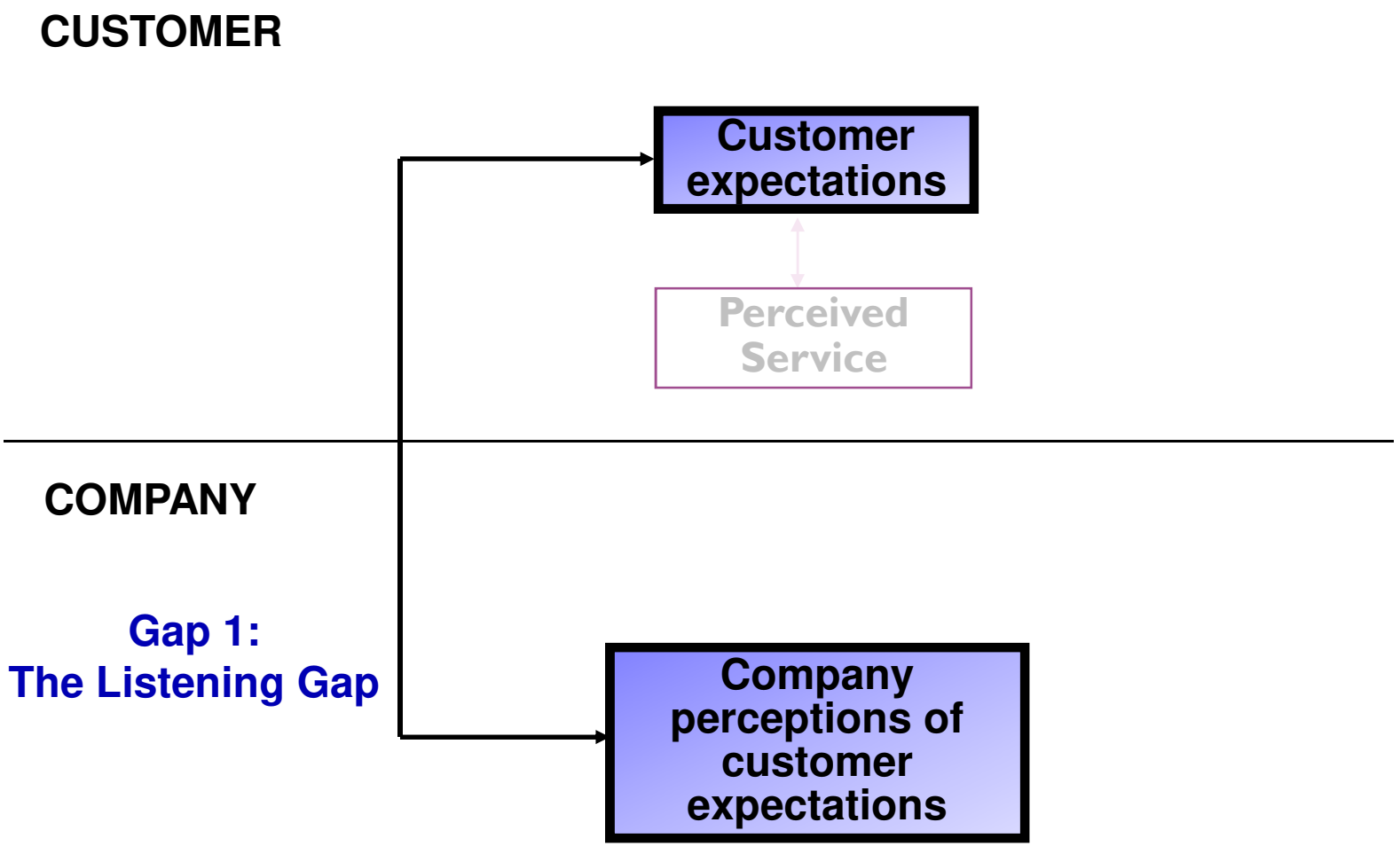
Gaps Model of Service Quality

- Customer Gap:
  - difference between customer expectations and perceptions
- Provider Gap 1 (Listening Gap):
  - not knowing what customers expect
- Provider Gap 2 (Service Design & Standards Gap):
  - not having the right service designs and standards
- Provider Gap 3 (Service Performance Gap):
  - not delivering to service standards
- Provider Gap 4 (Communication Gap):
  - not matching performance to promises

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Provider Gap 1

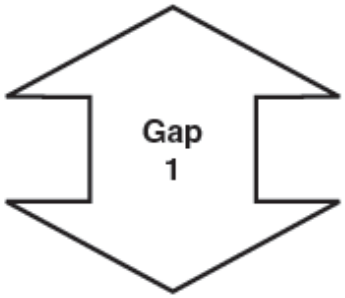


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Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 1

FIGURE 2.2
Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap l: the Listening Gap



Customer expectations

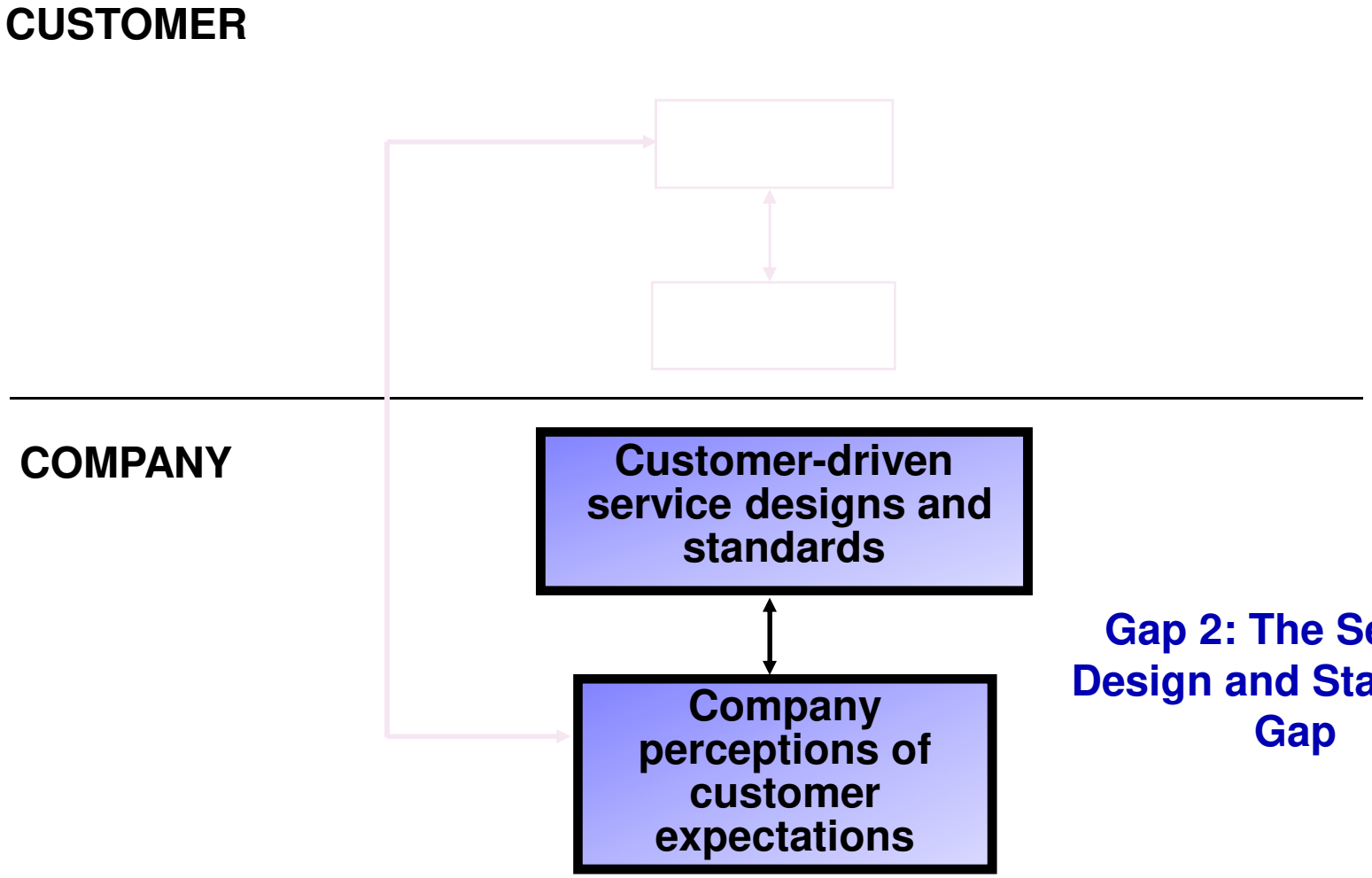
- ***Inadequate customer research orientation***
  - Insufficient customer research
  - Research not focused on service quality
  - Inadequate use of market research
- ***Lack of upward communication***
  - Lack of interaction between management and customers
  - Insufficient communication between contact employees and managers
  - Too many layers between contact personnel and top management
- ***Insufficient relationship focus***
  - Lack of market segmentation
  - Focus on transactions rather than relationships
  - Focus on new customers rather than relationship customers
- ***Inadequate service recovery***
  - Lack of encouragement to listen to customer complaints
  - Failure to make amends when things go wrong
  - No appropriate recovery mechanisms in place for service failures

Company perceptions of customer expectations

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Provider Gap 2

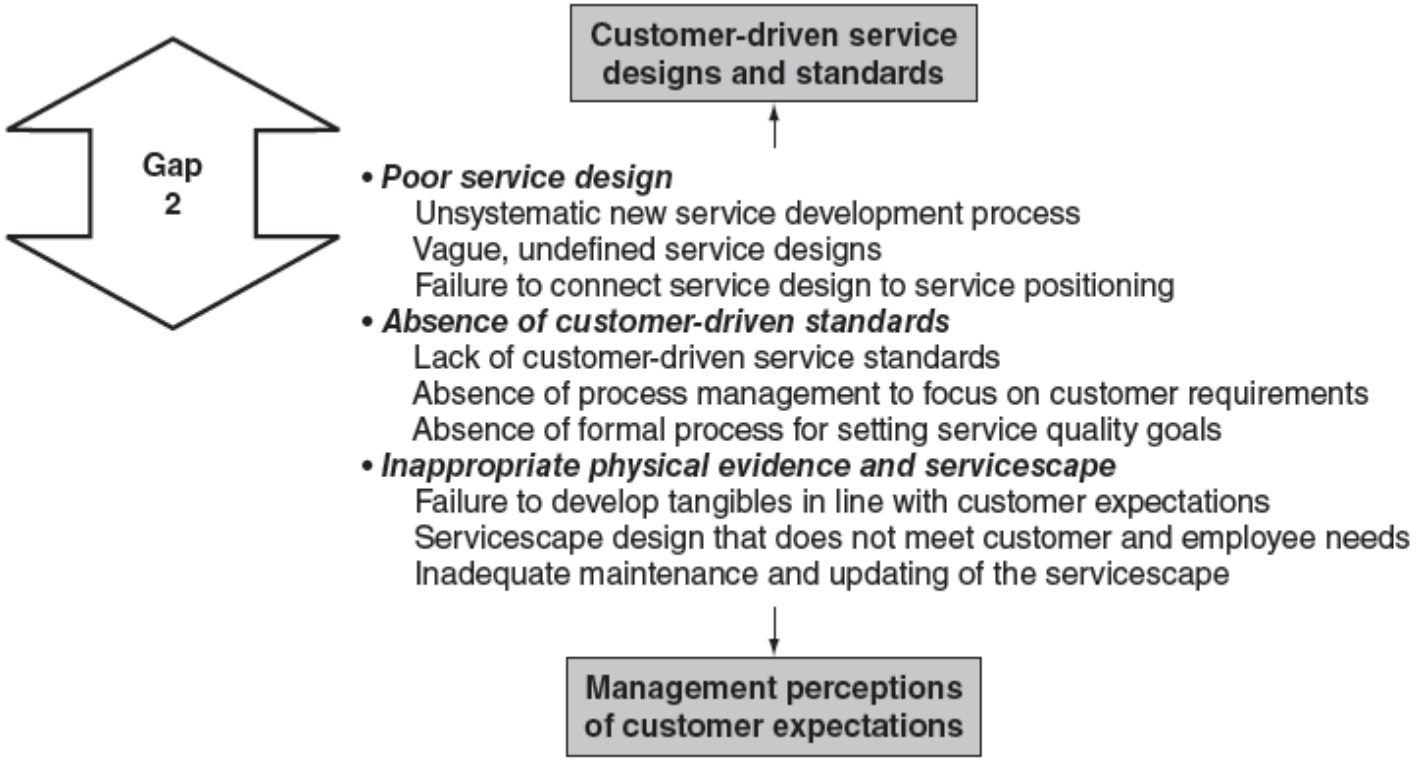


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Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 2

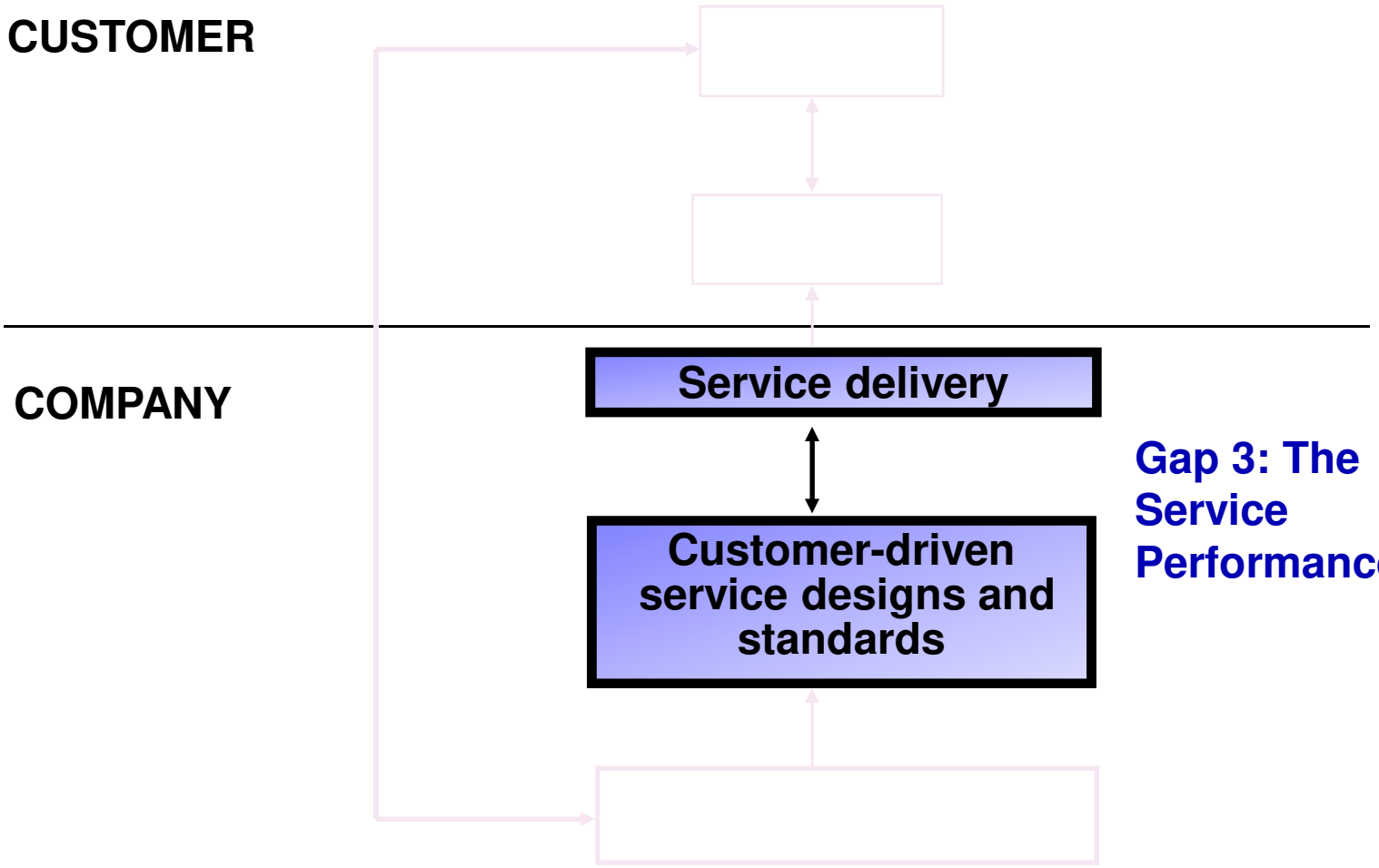
FIGURE 2.3
Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 2: the Service Design and Standards Gap



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Provider Gap 3

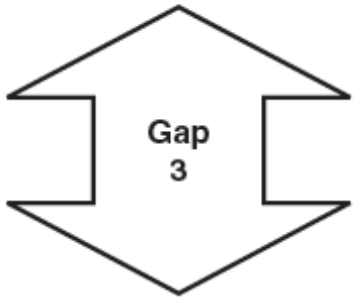


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Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 3

FIGURE 2.4
Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 3: the Service Performance Gap



Customer-driven service designs and standards

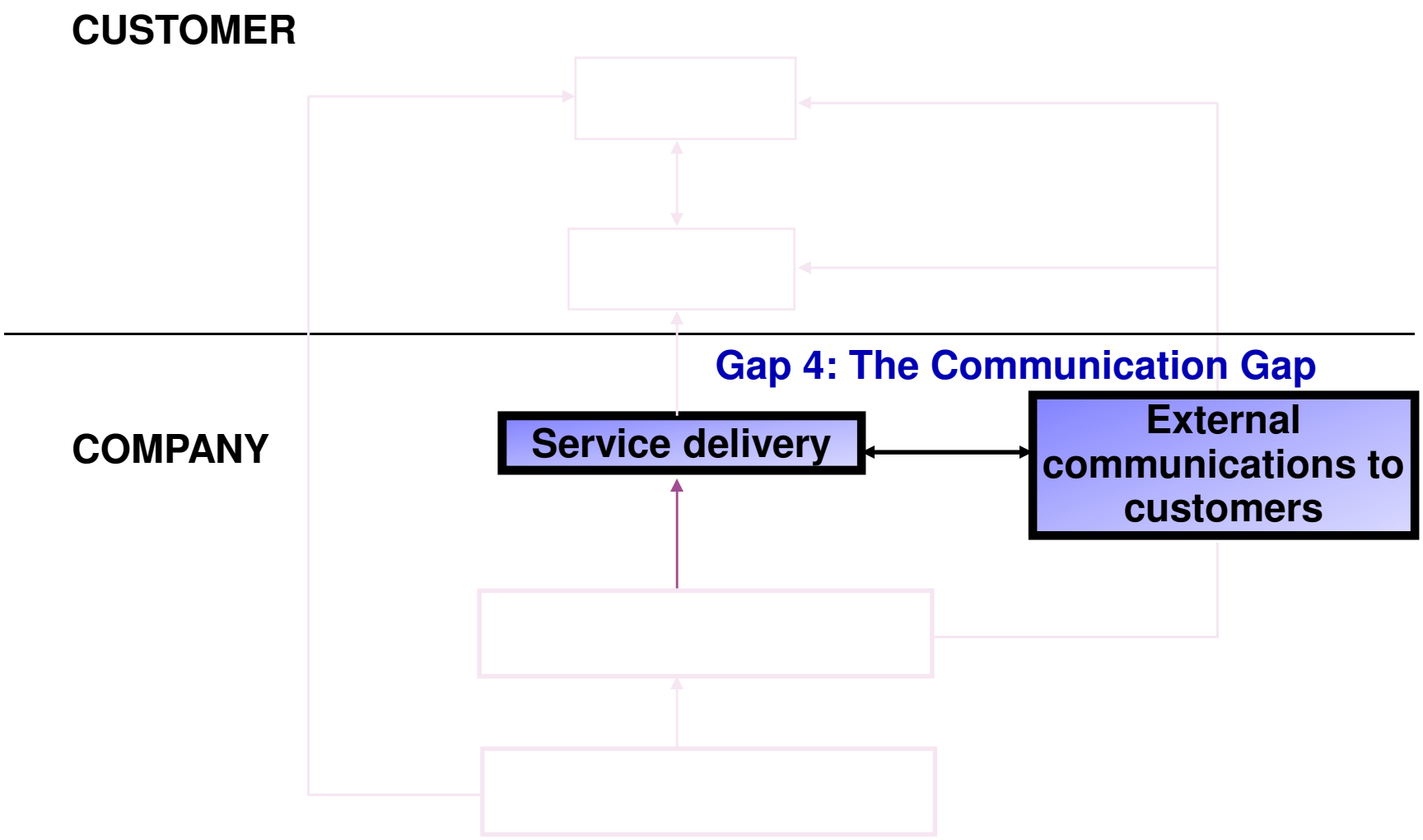
- ***Deficiencies in human resource policies***
  - Ineffective recruitment
  - Role ambiguity and role conflict
  - Poor employee–technology job fit
  - Inappropriate evaluation and compensation systems
  - Lack of empowerment, perceived control, and teamwork
- ***Failure to match supply and demand***
  - Failure to smooth peaks and valleys of demand
  - Inappropriate customer mix
  - Overreliance on price to smooth demand
- ***Customers not fulfilling roles***
  - Customers lack knowledge of their roles and responsibilities
  - Customers negatively impact each other
- ***Problems with service intermediaries***
  - Channel conflict over objectives and performance
  - Channel conflict over costs and rewards
  - Difficulty controlling quality and consistency
  - Tension between empowerment and control

Service delivery

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Provider Gap 4

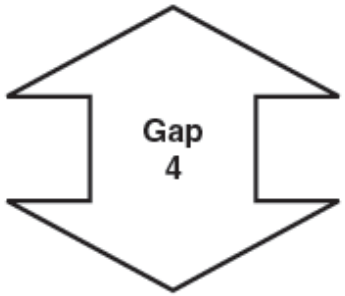


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Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 4

FIGURE 2.5
Key Factors Leading to Provider Gap 4: the Communication Gap



Service delivery

- ***Lack of integrated services marketing communications***
  - Tendency to view each external communication as independent
  - Not including interactive marketing in communications plan
  - Absence of strong internal marketing program
- ***Ineffective management of customer expectations***
  - Not managing customer expectation through all forms of communication
  - Not adequately educating customers
- ***Overpromising***
  - Overpromising in advertising
  - Overpromising in personal selling
  - Overpromising through physical evidence cues
- ***Inadequate horizontal communications***
  - Insufficient communication between sales and operations
  - Insufficient communication between advertising and operations
  - Differences in policies and procedures across branches or units
- ***Inappropriate pricing***
  - High prices that raise customer expectations
  - Prices that are not tied to customer perceptions of value

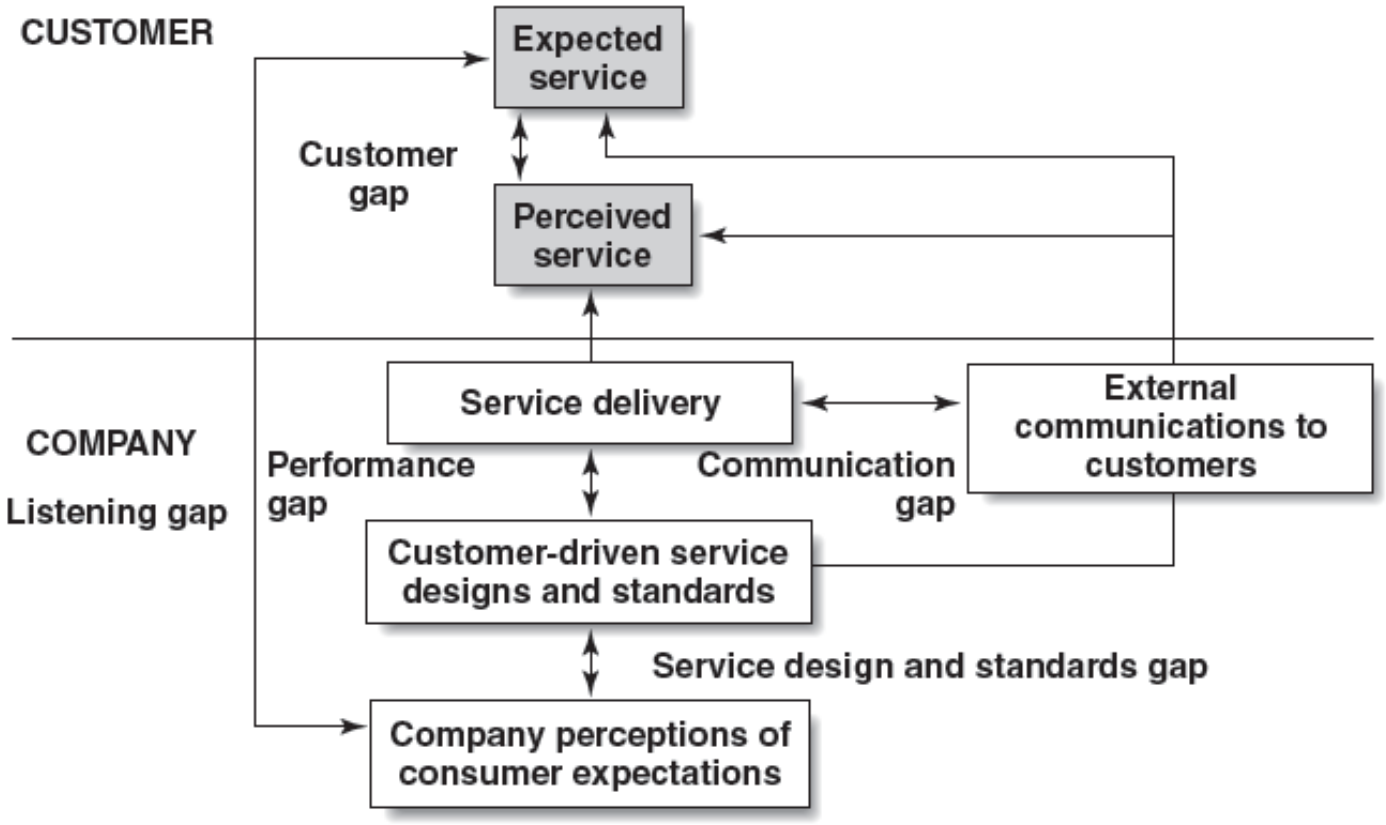
External communications to customers

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Gaps Model of Service Quality

FIGURE 2.6
Gaps Model of Service Quality



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Ways to Use Gap Analysis

- Overall Strategic Assessment:
  - How are we doing overall in meeting or exceeding customer expectations?
  - How are we doing overall in closing the four company gaps?
  - Which gaps represent our strengths and where are our weaknesses?

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Ways to Use Gap Analysis

- Specific Service Implementation
  - Who is the customer? What is the service?
  - Are we consistently meeting/exceeding customer expectations with this service?
  - If not, where are the gaps and what changes are needed? (Examine gaps 1-4 for this particular service.)

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