SIMULATION AND INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE WITH TEXT MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY

THE SERVICE TRAINER HANDBOOK:

Managing Service Businesses in the 1990's

D. KEITH DENTON

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Simulation And Instructor's Guide
With Test Manual to Accompany
THE SERVICE TRAINER HANDROOK:
MANAGING SERVICE BUSINESSES
IN THE 1990'S
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MANAGING SERVICE BUSINESSES
IN THE 1990'S
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PREFACE

This is a unique non-computer simulation that is educational, fun and extremely easy to use. Key features include a study guide or Handbook used to acquire enough knowledge to do well and a monopoly style playing board and question or playing cards. These cards and the game itself focus on both the broad service management knowledge needed to design good service and a wide range of operational how-to techniques necessary to deliver good service. These techniques range from the purely statistical to those that are motivational.

The instructions required for running the simulation are only six pages in length. The remaining pages and graphics in this manual are used directly in the simulation. At the end of the manual there are multiple choice questions and transparency overheads for facilitators who want a more traditional means of evaluating performance, who are using the manual as a stand-alone item, or who seek to combine the simulation with traditional testing. Grading participants' performance is not essential to running the simulation, but a system for grading is explained in this instructor's manual.

The simulation can be used either in university business management programs or as part of corporate training activities. It can and has been used as an alternative to lectures, films, and tests on service management and service concepts. The simulation has also been used to enhance both the knowledge and ability of employees and managers who must deliver quality service.

I have used the simulation both in Production/Operations Management courses at a university, and as part of practitioner's conferences and seminars. In both cases the key advantage of the simulation is its interactive nature and ease of operation. Instead of passively sitting through a lecture or film, students are actively involved in learning. In the process both students and practitioners can improve not just their understanding, but also the ability to deliver quality service.

Let me know if you have suggestions or come up with your own service situations. If you choose to share them, I may be able to include them in later editions of this manual and give you credit as I did with Hewlett-Packard which donated some questions.

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OVERVIEW

As noted in the preface, the simulation consists of both a Handbook (used to acquire enough knowledge to play the game), a playing board, and related material. In the actual simulation participants roll a die, move around a playing board, and draw question cards when they land on certain spots. The key spots they can land on are **Challenge**, **Trivia**, or **Service Situation** squares. Participants then draw an appropriate card from a deck of cards. If they correctly respond they can continue to move around the board, collecting "Gold Service Cards." The playing board and materials used in the simulation are seen in Figure 1.

If participants incorrectly answer the question or lose a "challenge" to their answer, then the die is passed on to the next person or team. Challenges occur whenever another team or person believes they have a better answer than the champion (the one answering the question). Gold Service Cards are given for correct answers, successful challenges, and complete trips around the board. Cards can also be awarded for where a team finishes on the playing board. Those with the most Gold Service Cards "win."

The simulation is more than just an enjoyable way to explore the concept of service. It provides participants with the knowledge and skill needed to improve services. Participants test their knowledge of service whenever they draw and correctly answer either a Challenge or Trivia question. Challenge questions involve managerial or strategic service issues, while Trivia questions, as the name implies, relate to interesting or intriguing facts and information about services.

The simulation tests more than a participant's knowledge about service; I believe it also helps tests their ability to deliver appropriate service. This condition occurs whenever they draw Service Situation Cards and are asked for an appropriate response. These cards are actual real-life service incidents that occurred or what one CEO calls "moments of truth." By responding to these incidents, participants can not only practice what they have learned, but also get a chance to use their own intuition and judgment.

Organization

To run the simulation, a facilitator first divides a group into teams. This usually involves choosing three or four teams for each playing board. Each team usually consists of three participants. Next, participants are asked to read their Handbook. The Service Trainer Handbook provides participants with a study guide and the basic knowledge to do well in the simulation. They will need time to read the Handbook. In college classes I allow two or three weeks. In seminars I either allow one week to read the material or use the Service Situation questions and some of the broader, less detailed Challenge and Trivia questions. Answers to these less difficult questions can be deduced. Presentations by facilitators can be used to increase participants' knowledge so they can answer some of the more difficult and detailed questions. More information about the degree of difficulty of the questions is described in Appendix 3 (Not Statistically Valid - But Interesting Facts).

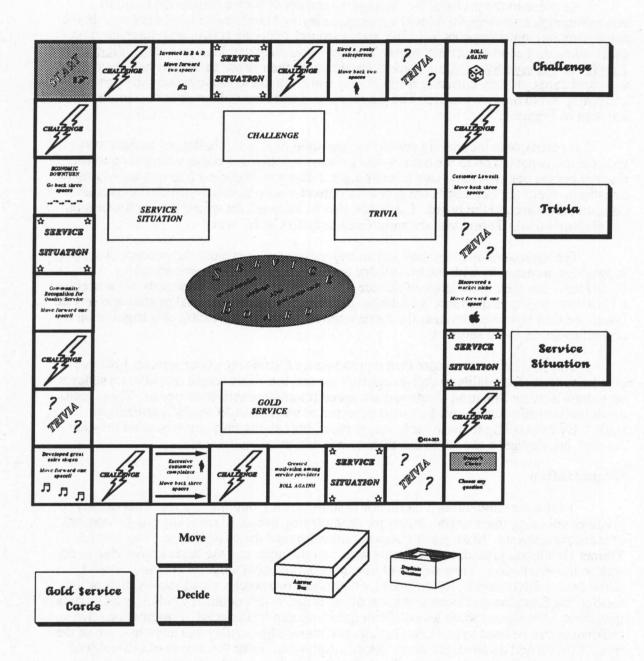


Figure 1

Playing The Game

Each team is given a set of instructions for playing the game similar to those in Appendix 1. Next a central decision-maker needs to be chosen to run each playing board that is used. I call this moderator (tongue 'n' cheek) the Dalai Lama. The teacher, trainer, or facilitator can act as this person or another individual can be selected. In college classes, I choose this person based on high scores on previous tests as well as their personality.

This person should not have a dominating personality, nor should they be thought of as a "wimp." The Dalai Lama's job is to run the playing board which consists primarily of listening to the responses of teams, then comparing those answers to the ones on answer cards (see Appendix 6) to make sure their answers are comparable. During the course of the simulation, there will be times when a champion team, answering a question, is challenged by another team who think they have a better answer. In most cases, one team's answer is clearly better than another team's, but it is always the Dalai Lama's responsibility to decide which is most compatible with those responses on the answer card. These and other duties of this central decision maker are described in Appendix 2. The advantage of having such a person for each playing board is that it dramatically reduces any bickering and speeds up the simulation.

Before playing the simulation, you can use one of the playing boards provided with Service TrainerTM Handbook. If this is too small for your purpose, you can construct a playing board similar to that in Figure 1. Construction of this board is described in Appendix 3. Appendix 3 also describes how to assemble the playing cards and Answer Box and Duplication Box. You will need to construct these regardless of whether you use the playing board that is provided or construct your own. As noted earlier, each board is used by three or four teams, of three members each. Each board also has a central moderator (e.g., Dalai Lama).

As the simulation begins, each team rolls a die to determine which team begins play. The team with the highest roll goes first and as the simulation goes on, each team to the left will take its turn. The starting team takes its turn and will land on either a Challenge, Trivia, or Service Situation square. At that time, they draw an appropriate card and formulate an answer to the question that was posed. If they cannot answer, answer incorrectly, or lose a challenge to their answer, they lose their turn and the team to the left gets a chance to be the champion. As long as the champion team answers correctly, they can continue to move around the board and collect Gold Service Cards for three successive times. At that time, they pass the die to the next team. Of course at any point, a team's answer to a Challenge question can be challenged. For more information about specific procedures, please refer to Appendix 1's Instruction on How to Play the Simulation.

Administration

In management classes, I have run the simulation two or three times during the course of a semester. Each simulation exercise lasts approximately forty to forty-five minutes. This assumes the playing board, cards, and playing pieces have already been set up at the start of the class.

As noted earlier, it is often wise to provide students with Review Questions similar to those in Appendix 4. Some examples of the questions are as follows:

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 - 1. What is the value of quality service? (T1, C1, T2)
 - 2. What is the cost of poor quality? (T2, C14, C2, C3)
 - 3. Who performs service work? (T3, T5)

There are 36 questions listed in Appendix 4 and each question has one or more numbers directly under it and enclosed in parentheses as in the example above. The letter-number combination following each question corresponds to specific questions that participants can draw whenever they land on a Challenge, Trivia, or Service Situation square. Therefore, "T1" means that Trivia question number one (see above) relates to this category (e.g., value of quality service). Information about this subject area and others can be found in the Handbook. Appendix 7 identifies where, within the Handbook, each question was drawn.

The "C's" and "T's" under each question identify whether the question is a Challenge or Trivia question. None of the 36 questions provided for students has a notation for Service Situation questions. Section IV of the Handbook contains all the Service Situations and questions posed about those situations. To review the Service Situation, participants need only to read Section IV of their Handbook and answer or respond to those questions.

Naturally, if you provide a set of review questions for your participants similar to those seen in Appendix 4 of this manual, do not include numbers like T1, C1, or T2 under the questions. These numbers are shown only for reference purposes. From your viewpoint, knowing which cards relate to specific questions has several advantages. For one thing, knowing which of the question cards relates to a specific topic helps insure that certain topics will be discussed. To insure adequate discussion, merely include one or more of the appropriate questions in the deck of cards from which participants draw their question cards. For instance, if you want to make sure participants discuss the effect of technology or employee motivation on service, then choose an appropriate question from Appendix 5 that relates to this area and place one or more of those cards in the deck of cards participants will use. Answers to these questions are seen in Appendix 6. Seven such sequences of suggested questions is provided in Appendix 4. These sequences are suggested when participants are reviewing information over the entire Handbook. Using sequences similar to these helps insure broad coverage of a wide range of topics. Sometimes facilitators may only want to review a specific topic (e.g., SPC) or focus on a particular section of the Handbook (e.g., Section III - Employee Involvement). In this case, you should examine questions in Appendix 5 and select those you feel are most appropriate for your purposes.

Another advantage of using the review questions in Appendix 4 comes when using more than one playing board. I have used the simulation in a classroom of over 140 students. As such, I used ten different boards. In such a situation, you do not want students answering the same questions and thereby receiving an unfair advantage. Likewise, if you have several classes, you do not want participants from earlier classes telling those in later classes some of the answers. Therefore, you can use the review question that covers a certain area (e.g., value of quality service) and then select a question like T1 that relates to that area. For another group or class, you can choose another

question, like T2, that is different, but relates to the same subject area. It is also wise to shuffle all of the cards that will be used so they do not come up in the same sequence for all groups.

Rationale

A complete Cross-Index of all of the Challenge, Trivia, and Service Situation questions that can be used in the simulation are seen in Appendix 7. These four pages provide a cross-index of where each question was drawn from participant's Handbook. They are cross-indexed so you know where information about a particular question can be found in the Handbook. All of the Challenge and Trivia questions used in the simulation can be cross-indexed to specific sections within the Handbook. Note that all of these questions are indexed not only by page number, but by line as well. That way the facilitator knows exactly what page and line of the Handbook relates to any specific question. When referencing a question in participant's Handbook by page and line be sure to note how I counted the lines. In referencing a particular subject, I counted down from the first line on a page and also counted two lines for each space between paragraphs.

While <u>all</u> of the Challenge and Trivia questions could be answered by reading and comprehending the information in the Handbook, only about one-half of the Service Situation questions could be answered in this manner. The reason is simple: all the Service Situations come from real-life service incidents that occurred; unlike many textbooks where answers are black or white, real-life situations have a lot of gray areas. Almost all of the Challenge questions, which deal with strategic or managerial issues, have a specific approach that has proven best or most appropriate. Either you know the best approach or not. The same is true of Trivia questions, which include facts and interesting data in which, again, either you know it or you do not. However, this is not the case for Service Situation questions.

In these real-life service incidents, knowledge of managerial guidelines for service helps, but individual judgment and decision making are still needed. It is not enough to simply have a great depth of knowledge about service management; you will also be called upon to use a certain amount of intuition and judgment.

One other point about these Service Situations should be made. Since they are real-life solutions, the solution on the answer card may not be the best approach, but it was the approach the real-life employee or manager chose. It is vital to the learning process that these issues be discussed. These questions are often the favorite questions of more experienced or knowledgeable participants. I have found participants with limited management skill prefer the black and white aspect of Challenge and Trivia questions, where practitioners with more experience prefer Service Situations.

Conclusion

The simulation itself can be used as an alternative to tests, or simply as a way of helping people explore the parameters of service. It also is an excellent vehicle to help them prepare for traditional testing and evaluation on service topics. When an individual has thoroughly read their Handbook and participated in the simulation, they better understand what it takes to design and deliver quality service.

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For me, the simulation has proved to be an exciting and more effective way to transfer learning. It is easy to run and administer. Once you construct the playing board, (or use the one provided with the student Handbook) and set it up like that seen in Figure 1, you need only to choose a central moderator for each board. Divide your group into teams, give them the instructions, and have them read their Handbook (although surprisingly some do quite well without it, reading it helps the vast majority play more competitively). Since simulation is designed to run autonomously, all you have to do is observe and occasionally clarify an unusual question.

If you choose to use the Handbook and do not wish to use the simulation but still want to test participants' knowledge, then you can use the multiple choice questions provided in Appendix 8. I have used these questions when giving students a choice between playing the simulation with a team or taking a traditional 30-point quiz on the same subject. Some choose the quiz, which I give at the end of the course, but the vast majority prefer the simulation.

APPENDIX 1

INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO PLAY THE SIMULATION

How To Play

- (1) Read the Service Trainer™ and divide into teams of three people. Each playing board will have three or four teams. Each playing board also consists of playing pieces, a die, playing cards (e.g., Challenge, Trivia and Service Situation), Answer Cards, Gold Service Cards, Move Cards and other administrative material.
- (2) To begin the simulation, roll the die. The team with the highest number begins play. As each team finishes their turn, the team on their left always goes next.
- (3) When play begins, the team with the die or whose turn it is moves the number of spaces corresponding to those on the die or on the "Move" card. These Move Cards are included in the simulation for anyone who does not like a roll of the die to determine the number of spaces they move on the board. Move Cards are randomly placed in a pile with either the number four, five or six on the bottom side of the cards. A person drawing one of these cards moves the corresponding number of spaces.
- (4) Before a team lands on one of the squares, each team needs to designate a spokesperson who will answer all questions posed when the team lands on the square. A person on each team also needs to be designated as the recorder. The recorder jots down the team's answers so they can be recited when needed.
- (5) Any team in the simulation may land on one of three spaces marked either Challenge, Trivia or Service Situation. Each of these squares requires the team landing on the square to draw an appropriate card and correctly answer it before being able to move again.
- After a team lands on a space on the board and has a card drawn from an appropriate stack, it is read by the team. After the card has been read, the team usually turns away from the board and discusses the question. During this time, they jot down their key points. With Challenge questions, the team usually has about 90 seconds to compose solutions, jot them down and give their answer (normally, it will take thirty seconds to give your answer so keep that time requirement in mind). Trivia and Service Situation questions must be discussed and conclusions or key points jotted down and answers verbally given, all within approximately a 40-second time limit.
- (7) With Trivia questions there is only one answer and the choices are clear-cut. However, with Challenge questions there are two categories of such questions. One category consists of questions that list three to seven items or variables about a particular subject (discussed in Section I through III of your Service Trainer™ Handbook). Normally, if the team is able to identify some of those items on each of these lists, they receive a "Gold Service" card (team with the most Gold Service Cards wins). If your team accurately answers the question, then you receive one of these cards, and also roll the die (or move) again.

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- (8) The other type of Challenge questions that can be drawn require the team to provide a rationale, reason or description of a concept explained in the Handbook. The purpose of these questions is to determine if the you understand a specific service concept. Answers to both types of Challenge questions, as well as all questions, are contained in an "Answer Box." These Answer Cards contain key points that must be part of a team's answer.
- (9) There is also an exact duplicate of each of these and all other questions in a box called, not surprisingly, "Duplicate Questions" box. These questions are usually given to opposing teams by a board's moderator so those teams can also read them and formulate possible answers.
- (10) As the name implies, on all Challenge questions, a team can be "challenged."
 When a team lands on a Challenge space, they draw a card; players then briefly jot down key points of their answers and then verbally recites them to the Moderator.
 The Moderator then compares those answers to the one on the Answer Card and tells the group how many of the points on the Answer Card the champion has identified. For instance, the Moderator may say "the champion has three of the five key points; are there any challengers?"
- (11) For each board, this neutral person, or Moderator, called the <u>Dalai Lama</u> is responsible for running the simulation and listening to participants. This person is assigned to a board by the facilitator or teacher. The Dalai Lama will read a team's answer, but will give no indication if the answer is right or wrong. Once this person has told the group how many of the key points the champion has answered, he or she says to the rest of the teams, "Does anyone challenge?" If no one challenges and the champion has met the criteria on the question, they keep control. If the champion is wrong, they lose their turn.
- (12) If there is one or more challengers, these teams are essentially saying to the champion (team responding) that they believe they have a better answer or that the champion's answers are wrong. When the Dalai Lama says, "Does anyone challenge?" if only one team responds "yes," then the neutral person will ask a second question, "How many spaces do you bid?" (a team can bid from one to seven spaces). If the team wins the challenge and, for example, they bid six spaces, then they can move forward six spaces and receive a Gold Service Card; if they lose the challenge, they then move back those six spaces. All challengers have thirty seconds to respond.
- (13) Two or more teams challenge. Normally, there can only be one challenger. If there is more than one team that wants to challenge, then the Dalai Lama asks each team, in secret, to write down on a piece of paper the number of spaces they bid, and hand it to their Moderator. As noted, they can bid up to seven spaces. The team bidding the highest number of spaces gets the honor of challenging. If two teams bid the same spaces, then one of two approaches can be used. One is to roll the die (highest roll) to determine who will be the challenger. The other approach is for the Moderator to secretly read all answers (champion and all challengers that bid the exact same number of spaces) and choose which team had the most correct answers. If this approach is used, challengers who lose should be penalized. Usually, this penalty involves not being allowed to "challenge" the next one or two Challenge questions that are drawn, or moving back the number of spaces they have previously bid. The Moderator decides which of these two options to use.

- (14) All ties (equally correct answers) go to the champion, but ties are usually rare.

 Many times either the champion or challenger has clearly a better or worse answer.

 If there is any doubt, the neutral judge (after reading answer out loud) sometimes will ask the other teams, not competing, which one they believe has the better answer. This neutral person can consider majority opinions but, in the final analysis, it is up to this Dalai Lama to decide who has the answer that comes closest to that on the answer card.
- (15) The team with the best answer then receives a Gold Service Card. If the champion has the better answer, then they continue to move around the board and land on other spaces. On the other hand, if the champion does not have the best answer, then they lose their turn and do not receive a service card. It is then the next team's (the one on the left) turn to be the champion.
- (16) As a team moves around the board, they will eventually land on a Service Situation square. They are usually given 40 seconds or so to choose a response. Service Situations are real cases, solved by real managers. They have been provided to the team ahead of time, since they are described in your Handbook. In some cases, the team is asked to decide what to do and to provide the rationale for what they decided to do. The team answering the question can either tell what they thought the manager did in a particular case or, probably more beneficial, tell what they believe is the best approach. To do this they state, "I think the manager should...."
- Once the team states their answer, the neutral person then reads the answer card. In the end, it is up to this neutral person to decide if (1) the team answering the question matched what the real manager did or (2) if the person answering the question does have a better approach. A team answering a question can increase the likelihood of having their choice accepted as the best approach if they clearly express their thoughts and have a well thought-out strategy. Ultimately, it is up to the Dalai Lama to decide if the real manager in the service situation or the player had the best approach. It is here that the moderator must exercise judgment.
- Collecting Gold Service Cards. Teams can collect these cards through four ways. First, a team can collect Gold Service Cards by landing on Challenge, Trivia and Service Situations and successfully answering the questions posed. If a team is able to successfully answer three consecutive questions and remain the champion, they receive an extra card and then pass the die or their turn to the team on their left. A team also receives two Gold Service Cards every time they go around the board and land on or pass the "Start" square. Sometimes a Moderator can also give two Gold Service Cards if a team answers all of the key points, rather than partial answers. For instance, if five key points are mentioned, and a team only needs two to receive a card and roll again, but they are able to answer all five, then the Moderator could award two rather than one Gold Service Card. Finally, a team can receive Gold Service Cards if they are able to predict whether the team answering the question was right or wrong. Here is how it works.
- (19) Any time a team answers either a Trivia or Service Situation question, there is no challenging, but a team can collect cards by getting several "hits." For instance, suppose one of the teams gives an answer to a Trivia or Service Situation question. Before the Moderator tells the team if they are right or wrong and before looking at the Answer Card, he or she says, "Do you agree or disagree?" meaning do you (as a member of the other teams) agree or disagree with the champion's answer to

the question. At this point, each team anonymously turns in a Decide Card, face up. This card has "Decide" on one side and either "Agree" or "Disagree" on the other side. After teams turn in their decision cards and before looking at their answers, the Moderator then reads the answer and says whether it was correct or incorrect, checks the Decide Cards, and informs the teams whether they were correct or not. If the champion team was right and your team agreed, then you would receive credit for one "hit." Three hits and you receive a card. Likewise, if the champion team's answer was judged incorrect and you disagreed with that team, then your team recorded a hit. It is up to the Moderator to keep track of these hits. Usually, this is done by giving out three small red (or other color) cards; three of the red "hit" cards can be turned in for a Gold Service Card. Hits only occur with Trivia and Service Situations.

- (20) The central figure of each board in this simulation is the neutral person or Moderator. This person is selected by the teacher or facilitator and is guaranteed the maximum points for running the game. These people are selected based on their past performance on tests and quizzes, or other intangibles. Normally, the students with the highest test scores are given the opportunity to be this Dalai Lama. This person must have read the material, be able to make decisions, use judgment, and keep track of the hits and time.
- (21) Scoring. The game concludes approximately five minutes before the end of the class. Gold Service Cards are turned in by each of the playing board moderators (moderators are chosen by the teacher). Points are totaled by collecting Gold Service Cards and by when a team finishes as follows:
 - A. A Gold Service Card is accumulated for each right answer and how fast they move around the board (two cards each time you move around the board), successful challenges and making good decisions (e.g., hits).
 - B. At the end of the simulation, the team with the most cards gets 10 points, 2nd place gets 9 points, 3rd place gets 8 points and 4th place gets 7 points. These points are for three days so it is possible to finish in third place on one day and second (or some other position) the next time the simulation is run. If only three teams are used, then the team finishing first receives 10 points, second place receives 8.5 points and third receives 7 points.
 - C. If there is a tie for a position, then the following occurs. For instance, suppose one team collected 12 Gold Service Cards, two teams have 10, and a fourth team has 8; then there would be one first place worth 10 points, two second places worth 9 points, and a fourth place worth 7 points.

Summary Of Steps

STEP

- 1. Choose teams.
- 2. Roll die to see who goes first.
- 3. <u>Use Move Cards</u> or die and move appropriate spaces.
- 4. Answer a question after jotting down answer.
- 5. Receive a Gold Service Card and move again by successfully answering questions (maximum of three turns).
- 6. If challenged, meet the challenge or lose your turn.
- 7. When your team is not the champion, then prepare challenges and be able to turn in Decide cards for hits.
- 8. Team with the most cards receives the most points for the simulation.