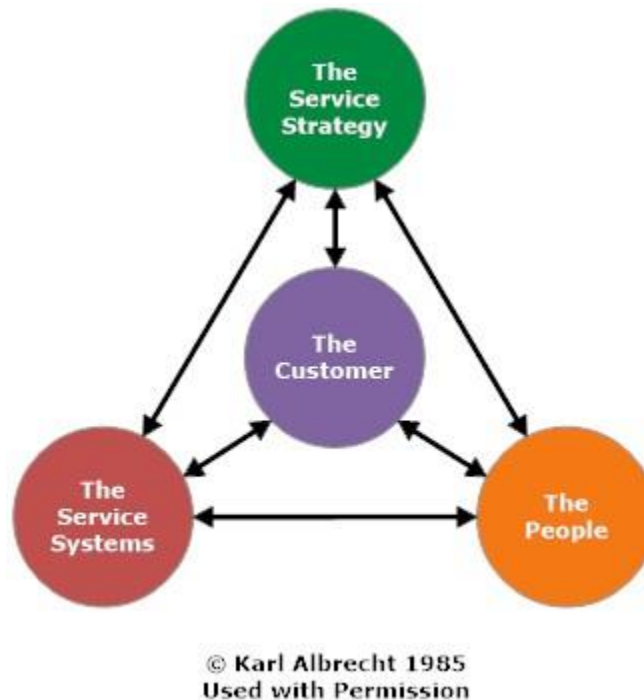


Knowledge Worker

Quality of Service Profile

(May 2019)

Recently, in the course of adding a new tool to the [Knowledge Workers' Tool Room](#), I had occasion to work with well-known author Karl Albrecht. The tool I added was Karl's "Service Triangle," shown below.



The Service Triangle is presented and discussed in Chapter 3 of Karl's best-selling book, *Service America! Doing Business in the New Economy*, co-authored with the late Ron Zemke.

The Service Triangle indicates the customer is the focal point for three factors separating organizations providing outstanding service from those providing mediocre or poor service.

1. A well-conceived service strategy
2. Customer-friendly service systems
3. Customer-oriented frontline people

After adding the new tool, it occurred to me that the Service Triangle could also serve as the basis for a useful, though informal and subjective assessment of the quality of the service being provided by a company. There are some obvious questions lurking in the Service Triangle. For example: How good is the service strategy? How customer-friendly are the service systems? How customer-oriented are the frontline people? And so, in this month's column, I will lay out some guidelines for conducting the kind of assessment I have in mind and present another new tool called the "Quality of Service Profile."

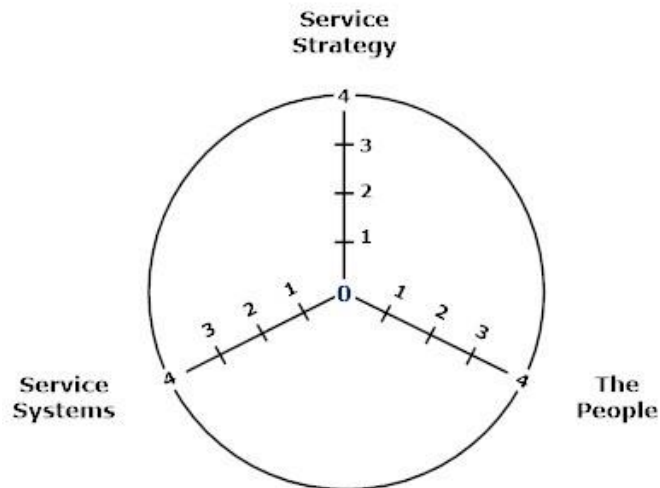
Knowledge Worker

Quality of Service Profile

(May 2019)

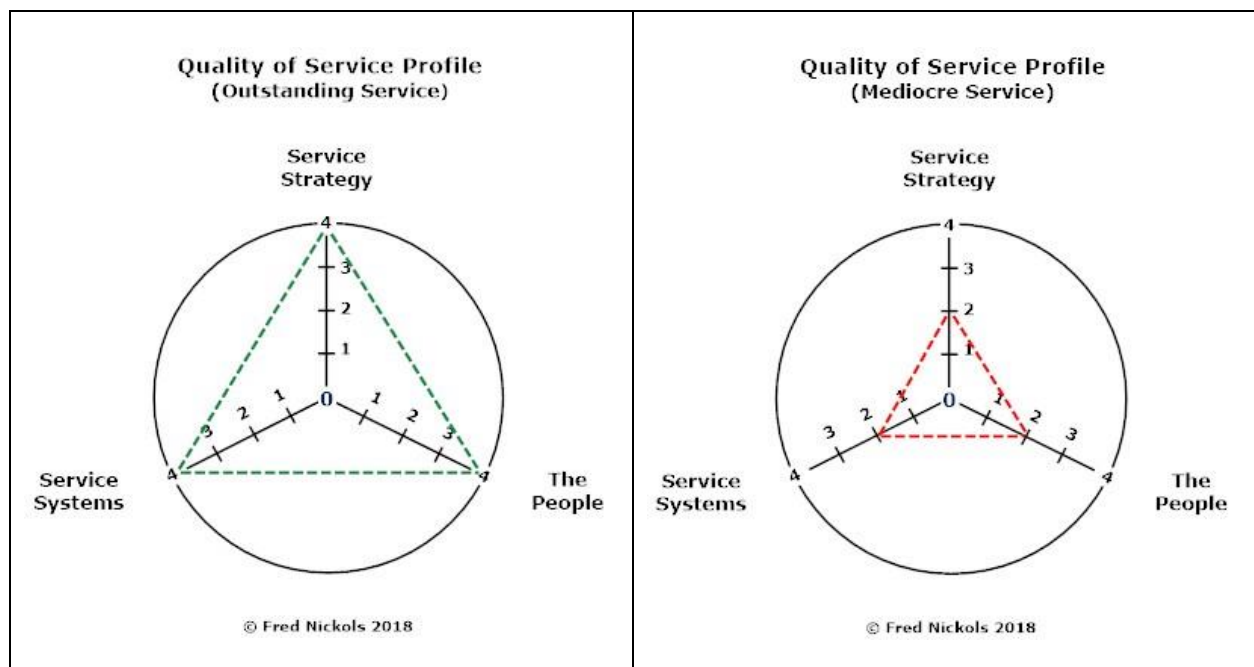
Assessing the quality of the service a company provides entails having people rate each of the three factors and then plotting the ratings on the scales in the Quality of Service Profile shown below.

Quality of Service Profile



© Fred Nickols 2018

Hypothetical profiles for an organization providing outstanding service and one providing mediocre service are shown below. (Real profiles would probably not be quite so evenly balanced.)



Knowledge Worker

Quality of Service Profile

(May 2019)

Assessment Guidelines

Following are some general guidelines for conducting the kind of assessment I have in mind.

Remember: Keep it simple; this is an informal, subjective assessment, not a formal, objective measurement.

- **First**, select representatives from relevant parts of the organization. Select people who can be trusted to make sound, well-informed judgments about the quality of the company's service. My inclination would be to select representatives from three areas of the company: (1) the executives concerned with service; (2) the systems people with responsibility for service systems; and (3) the frontline customer service people who actually interact with customers.
- **Second**, ask all the people selected three basic questions, each of which focuses on one point of the Service Triangle:
 1. To what extent does the service strategy of the company direct the attention of its people toward the real priorities of its customers?
 2. To what extent are the company's service delivery systems designed for the convenience of the customer instead of the convenience of the company?
 3. To what extent are the company's frontline people focused on, attentive to, responsive to, and willing to help customers?
- **Third**, ask them to rate their answers to each question using the 0 to 4 scale below.
 - 0 = Not at All (Terrible)
 - 1 = Not Much (Poor)
 - 2 = Somewhat (Mediocre)
 - 3 = Quite a Bit (Very Good)
 - 4 = Completely (Outstanding)
- **Fourth**, ask each person to plot their ratings on the Quality of Service Profile and connect the dots, yielding a three-sided profile as shown in the examples above. (An alternative is for someone to collect the ratings and do the plotting.)
- **Fifth**, share and discuss the ratings and any significant differences in the individually established profiles. Discuss also the basis for those differences. For example, do the executives see the service strategy as better (or worse) than the other two groups? Why? Do the systems folks see service systems as friendlier to the customers than the other two groups? Why? Do the frontline people view themselves as more helpful to customers than the way the other groups view them? Why?

Once the ratings and profiles are in hand, those conducting the assessment should be clear about how the representatives selected view the quality of the company's service, and they should also have some very interesting information about what the representatives see differently and why. The next steps depend on what the ratings, profiles, discussions and differences suggest.

Good luck and best wishes to any readers who elect to make use of this assessment for the purpose of improving the service provided by their company. In the meantime, I leave you with this question:

"What does your company's Quality of Service Profile look like?"

Knowledge Worker

Quality of Service Profile

(May 2019)

Additional Information

More information about the three factors of service quality is available in a free copy of Chapter 3 of *Service America* that Albrecht has made available on his site. Here is the [link](#). Chapter 3 is the fourth link on the page.

Reference

Albrecht, K. & R. Zemke (2001). *Service America!: Doing Business in the New Economy* (2nd Ed). Irwin Professional Publications: Burr Ridge, IL.

About the Author

Fred Nickols is a knowledge worker, writer, consultant, and former executive who spent 20 years in the U.S. Navy, retiring as a decorated Chief Petty Officer. In the private sector, he worked as a consultant and then held executive positions with two former clients. Currently, Fred is the *Chief Toolmaker* and *Lead Solution Engineer* at [Distance Consulting LLC](#). His web site is home to the award-winning [Knowledge Workers' Tool Room](#) and more than 200 free articles, book chapters and papers. Fred is a longtime member of ISPI and writes this monthly column for *PerformanceXpress*. A complete listing of all Knowledge Worker columns is available [here](#).