



Service **Resonance**

Theory of Service Dissonance® Introduction and
Overview

Service Dissonance®:

A new model for measuring the customer experience

At Service Resonance we don't believe that people aspire "to perform poorly" and that organisations set out to intentionally foster a culture of mediocrity. With each customer interaction an employee doesn't seek to sabotage the business and destroy customer loyalty. In fact, the opposite holds true and it is the service ecosystem (product design, staff training, performance management, organisational policies and information systems) that inhibits the employee from delivering a positive customer experience.

Customer service staffs are unique individuals. Most are grateful for the opportunity to work for a company and in our experience seek to make the company successful. Each employee has a deep sense of right and wrong, of fair and unfair. He brings these beliefs with him to every customer interaction. At Service Resonance Co. we refer to this as a **service disposition** and we all have them.

Without fail a customer service employee will seek to deliver a positive customer experience that is aligned with his internal service disposition. In a perfect service ecosystem, a customer service employee will deliver a positive customer experience every time. Of course, a perfect service ecosystem doesn't exist in the real world. All too often the employee is prevented from achieving his goal, a positive customer experience, by faults in the service ecosystem.

Each time an employee is prevented from delivering a positive experience by a fault in the service ecosystem it causes cognitive dissonance in the employee because the outcome is counter to his service disposition – his sense of right and wrong (Irem Metin, 2011 - Vol 1 No 6). We define the build-up of cognitive dissonance due to faults in the service ecosystem as **Service Dissonance®**. Service Dissonance accumulates over time leading to low employee engagement, reduced customer loyalty and low productivity.

Counteracting Service Dissonance is the positive feeling a customer service employee experiences when he can achieve his goal of delivering a positive customer experience. These customer interactions are described as being **Service Resonant**. These two forces, Service Dissonance and Service Resonance, are at play with every customer interaction. Ultimately, one of these forces dominates the service ecosystem and the organisation can be classified as being either Service Dissonant or Service Resonant.

Service Resonant companies are characterised by many positive attributes; high employee engagement, customer loyalty, and revenue and profit growth. Service Dissonant companies experience the opposite effect leading to low staff morale and productivity (Dollard, 2003), customer attrition, and low or negative growth.

We have discovered that the concept of Service Dissonance® provides a useful vocabulary when discussing customer interactions. It gives service designers, employees and executives a common framework for defining the nature of each customer interaction. Interactions that are highly Service Dissonant should be investigated and re-designed. By eliminating Service Dissonant processes an organisation will become more Service Resonant. The more Service Resonant an organisation becomes its Net Promoter Score* will increase. Thus, measuring Service Dissonance® provides a useful tool for targeting investment in the service ecosystem to drive a positive NPS.

*Net Promoter Score is a customer loyalty metric developed by (and a registered trademark of) [Fred Reichheld](#), [Bain & Company](#), and [Satmetrix](#).