

# Professional Certificate in Hospital Management



## Marketing Management for Healthcare

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Consumer behavior in service encounters. To understand consumer behavior, we have to really think about the process that customers adopt to buy or consume a service. So, it's a multistage process. Typically, we classify them into three stages. A pre-purchase stage. A service encounter stage. And post-purchase evaluation stage. And each of these stages have multiple steps. So, let me just put them all together. In the first stage, there is a concept of need recognition. Customers feel that they need a particular service, or they are looking for a certain service. So that's called as a need recognition stage. The second step is typically information search. So, for example, if you want to travel from point A to B, what are the options for you? It could be a public service, it could be a shared cab service, or you may use your personal transportation, and you may use your bike or a car, in which case it's selfservice. So, from need recognition, you typically go to information search. During information search process, you are really looking for information about alternatives and comparing them and that's called as evaluation of alternatives. So, you collect information and then you evaluate options. And evaluation of alternatives in in a service context would also require the customer to know the criteria. And also, be able to assess their importance. For example, a customer may want to go to a hospital to meet a doctor, in which case the information is not so easily available. You may not be able to assess the differences between the hospitals very easily and hence in a service context it has become slightly more challenging. And a simple regular services like a retailing services, you may be aware of all the retail options available in the neighborhood or you may choose an online option. So, the evaluation of alternative is slightly more elaborate, especially for high risk services and the services which are not very frequently used. Once you evaluate them, the next step is what we call as purchase and consumption, which may require multiple steps because you may need a reservation, or you may need to actually call up and fix an appointment. And then you have a service encounter stage where you meet with a service provider or you use a service and so that's called the purchase and consumption stage. And finally, in the post purchase evaluation stage, the customers are really comparing their expectations from the service with their experience. And if they feel that the experience was very good or satisfactory, they are likely to come back and be retained by the service organization or the service provider. So, the post-purchase evaluation is much more intrinsic to the customer, but it's important for the service provider because that determines whether the customer is

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going to return back to the organization or not. So, that's the five stages that are involved or steps that are involved in consumer behavior includes need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and consumption, and post-purchase.

