

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN HOTEL INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF HOTEL SERVICES IN GUNTUR CITY, AP

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HEAD

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ABSTRACT

In order to be successful in the competitive world, it is not sufficient to attract new customers and managers must concentrate on retaining existing customers implementing effective policies of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In Hotel Industry customer satisfaction is considered based on prompt and quality of service offered to them. The hotel management approach focused on customer satisfaction can improve customer loyalty, thus increasing the positive image of the touristic destination. Hence, exploring the importance for customers of hotel attributes in hotel selection is indispensable. The root cause of all these problems lies in the failure to adopt marketing approach. This is so because the marketing concept will facilitate them to be more scientific in solving their business problems, satisfy their customer's requirements or needs and maintain a profitable win-win relation with their customers, which will enable hotels to stay closer to their customers, maintain as well as increase market share and counter the competition successfully. The only 'mantra' to be competitive is to be cost effective. CRM is a strategy as well as tool in this direction. This makes it more relevant and important to undertake a study in this area. The researcher concludes discussing the result and proposing improvement in customer satisfaction Management of the hotel. The objective of this paper is to understand the concept of CRM in the Indian Hotel Industry (with special reference to Guntur) and to know the factors influencing Customer Relationship Management. The research aims at understanding the concept of CRM in Hotel services.

KEYWORDS

Customer satisfaction, Hotel industry, Service marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In order to survive in the present world of competition, hotels will have to formulate marketing strategies in a way to not only woo customers toward them but also retain them. The secret is that retention cost is very low when compared to the cost of attracting new customers. Some of the basic problems facing hotels today are provision of better service alternatives to its customers, generation of more income from non-core based services, improving the profitability of the hotel system and above all the "Customer Retention". The root cause of all these problems lies in the failure to adopt marketing approach. This is so because the marketing concept will facilitate them to be more scientific in solving their business problems, satisfy their customer's requirements or needs and maintain a profitable win-win relation with their customers, which will enable hotels to stay closer to their customers, maintain as well as increase market share and counter the competition successfully.

THE GUNTUR SCENARIO

Hotels in Guntur are facing high competition both from within the area and also from other hotels. In order to succeed under existing conditions, hotels will have to perceive the needs of the customers and devise better means of fulfilling them. In general, most of the studies on hotel sector deal with an analysis of financial aspects such as profitability, productivity and financial performance without much concentration on the customer retention, loyalty etc., which has now changed in the recent years, with attempts being made to study certain aspects of marketing in hotels. However, a majority of these studies have been on customer service satisfaction, without much focus on customer relationship management. Very few attempts have been made to assess the marketing function from a hotelier's point of view. With a dearth of literature on marketing of hotel services in Guntur is hoped that the present study makes a humble contribution in this area.

The changes in the present day hotel environment have led to introduction of a marketing philosophy in banks. The 7 Ps, Viz., product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence of a hotel can help in meeting customer needs as well as tackling competition and establishing a strong customer base with customer relationship management as a core function. With the emergence of liberalization in the Indian hotel system, there is a great change in the future hotel market scenario.

The marketing in hotels should aim at improving the quality of services rendered by widening the range of products offered, developing and promoting products which meet the needs of customers and that are acceptable to them. It should also be at a realistic price which will produce a profit when provided through methods of sales and services that are reliable and cost effective. Successful hotel marketing depends not only on marketing strategy and development but commitment at all levels, with the customer focus as the base.

CRM IN HOTEL SERVICES IN INDIA:

Today, a biggest challenge for managers in the hotel of Guntur is to provide and sustain customer satisfaction. Customer requirements for quality products and service in the tourism industry have become increasingly evident to the professionals. Customer relationship is an asset of the hotels and customer satisfaction is the starting point to define objectives.

Prominent features associated with a service sector like hotel sector are intangibility of service performance, greater involvement of the customer in the production of the service, difficulty in maintaining quality control and standards, the inability to maintain inventories and the importance of the time factor as customers limit the amount of time that they are willing to wait for the service to be provided, all of which makes the task of service providers even more daunting. In addition to the above aspects, a service provider has to contend with other forces which affect the very survival of his business. Every changing customer preferences, competing businesses encouraging away clientele, entry of international players providing quality of the decision making process.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The objective of this paper is to understand the concept of CRM in the Indian Hotel Sector (with special reference to Guntur) and to know the factors influencing Customer Relationship Management. The research aims at understanding the concept of CRM in Hotel services.

METHODOLOGY

A research study was undertaken to study the role of CRM in the hotels in Guntur, AP. The study has brought out varied aspects of CRM in hotel services. The study is discussed on this area, which makes it an important area to analyze for its scope and the possible impact it can have on the hotel sector in Guntur. CRM has come as boom of information technology, which when exploited will make the adopters competitive and cost effective.

SAMPLE

The study is conducted with the help of both primary and secondary data. The major sources of data are primary, where a structured questionnaire is designed with administered to the select respondents. The sampling is random. Sample size is 100 respondents. The secondary data is collected mainly through published articles, research studies, various documents and the internet.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the primary source has been tabulated and this forms the major basis for the research study. Sample Break up

TABLE 1

S.No	Hotel Name	No. of Respondents	%
1	Hotel Grand Nagarjuna	15	15
2	K & M International Hotel	20	20
3	Vajram Residency	15	15
4	Sindoori Gotel	15	15
5	Geetha Regency Hotel	20	20
6	Swagruha Hotel	15	15

The study covered 100 respondents for six different hotels, chosen at random.

GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION**TABLE 2**

S.No	Gender	No. of Respondents	%
1	Male	80	80
2	Female	20	20
	TOTAL	100	100

Education: Education makes a difference in articulation of opinions. Nearly 50% of the respondents have a minimum qualification as graduation, 20% are postgraduates, while nearly 15% if respondents have SSC and below as qualification and 10% of respondents have done their intermediate.

TABLE:3

S.No	Education	No. of Respondents	%
1	Illiterate	4	4
2	Below SSC	5	5
3	SSC	6	6
4	Intermediate	10	10
5	Graduates	50	50
6	Post Graduates	20	20
7	Others	5	5
	TOTAL	100	100

Occupation: The Maximum percentages of the respondents are from the business persons 30 percent, while government employees accounted for 15 percent followed by private employees at 20 percent.

TABLE 4

S.No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	%
1	Agriculture	5	5
2	House wife	3	3
3	Self Employed	5	5
4	Govt. Employee	15	15
5	Student	10	10
6	Business	30	30
7	Private Employee	20	20
8	Retired	6	6
9	Professional Consultant	6	6
	TOTAL	100	100

Association with the Hotel: Out of the 100 respondents; 30 percent were associated with hotel for 6-10 years, 30 percent for 2-5 years, 20 percent for were new customers (less than 2 years) and 20 percent were above 10 years.

TABLE 5

S.No	Number of years as a customer	No. of Respondents	%
1	Less than 2 years	20	20
2	2-5 years	30	30
3	6-10 years	30	30
4	Above 10 years	20	20
	Total	100	100

Reasons for choosing a particular Hotel: The reasons for choosing a particular hotel can prove to be an excellent input for devising strategies to attract new customer and retain the existing customer. For example, 19% have chosen that hotel for its nearness to their office; 23% have chosen the hotel for proximity to their residence; 15% chosen the hotel because of its very convenient timings; 7% for the response from the hotel's employees; 6 % for prompt service; 8% for modern technology; 10% on advice of friends and relatives and 12% for various other reasons.

TABLE 6

S.No	Reasons for Choosing a Hotel	No. of Respondents	%
1	Nearness to their office	19	19
2	Proximity to their residence	23	23
3	Convenient Timings	15	15
4	Hotel's Employees	7	7
5	Prompt Service	6	6
6	Modern Technology	8	8
7	Advice of friends and relatives	10	10
8	Other Reasons	12	12
	TOTAL	100	100

Employee Behavior: Employee behavior towards the customers plays an important role influencing their perception about the hotel and this plays a major role in the retention of customers and it goes a long way in creating effective Customer Relationship Management. It was an encouraging sign that 60% of the respondent felt that the employees were friendly, while 30% felt that they were normal, 4 % that they were causal or indifferent.

TABLE 7

S.No	Employee Behavior	No. of Respondents	%
1	Friendly	60	60
2	Normal	30	30
3	Causal	4	4
4	Indifferent	4	4
5	Hostile	2	2
	TOTAL	100	100

Help-line Facility: When asked about the helpline facility, 69% respondents said that they are aware of the facility, 51% of respondents have tried and out of them 93% felt that the service was prompt. When questioned about the satisfactory reply, 90% felt that the reply was satisfactory

Other Aspects: When asked about the relationship with the hotel, most of the respondents (89%) felt that they are very happy with the way they are treated by the hotel their needs are taken care of in the best possible manner and they really felt like a king when they visited the hotel. Most of them have never thought on this aspect (60%) of relationship the hotel maintains with them, by they expressed that they would love to have something of that order from the hotel.

It is an interesting fact to know that the Guntur hotels have slowly begun to realize the need of adopting a customer centric marketing philosophy in their operations. As changing conditions affect every aspect of business, marketing orientation becomes an important key to the survival and growth of a hotel as it leads to greater customer satisfaction and retention. To face the competition, the hotels are devising new offers with great strategic management. But there is yet much difference between the performances of varied hotels. The need of the hour is developing innovative means of attracting and retaining customers to say and grow with the market. Customer satisfaction, therefore, is the central aspect of the overall strategy of any hotel, which should finally lead towards establishing a long term relationship with customers. Hotels have to make their services accessible, affordable, convenient and customer friendly so that a customer feels like a king, cementing an emotional bond with the hotel, which will last a lifetime. Hyper-competition makes it difficult for the hotels to achieve their long term goals, however, in order to succeed and sustain under the existing market conditions, hotels will have to perceive the needs of its customers and devise better means of fulfilling them. The most important challenge before the hotel industry today is to generate a high degree of customer satisfaction and an effective customer relationship management strategy. The future of hotel lies in identifying and even anticipating new customer needs and developing new ways for satisfying such often unexpressed customer needs. To improve the performance of hotels, there is yet no substitute for providing better customer service leading towards creation of a solid bonding with the customer.

A customer of today would not only like to have a quick, efficient and timely service from the hotels but also a long term mutually beneficial relationship with the hotel. There is a necessity for every hotel to make its services accessible affordable.

CONCLUSION

The concept of CRM in the Hotel Sector is creating sustainable competitive advantages. The competition and drive towards profitability is making the hotels of Guntur move in the direction. It can be concluded that CRM acts as a key success factor in services marketing with a special reference to hotel services in Guntur.

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