Chapter 25
The Effect of Web 2.0 Usage in E-Service Quality in Hospitality

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the usage of Web 2.0 technologies in determining the level of quality of Websites in the Croatian hotel industry. Namely, in order to determine the level of quality, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of Websites qualitatively and quantitatively. From the data obtained, it is possible to determine the degree of information compliance with the wishes and needs of potential clients. As the basis of primary research, the authors use the original model evaluation on a selected sample of hotels in Croatia.

INTRODUCTION

Modern technology, particularly Internet undoubtedly represent a generator of the development of marketing in the hospitality industry. According to recent surveys, nearly all hotel facilities in Croatia are used, to some extent, information technology and their managers argue that the need for information technology is very high.

Managers of large hotels believe that information technology is an important factor in increasing business efficiency and increase the level of guest satisfaction. Many managers also believe that guests under-use certain types of information technology, they have at their disposal. In the hotel industry, on many occasions, pointed out the advantages of increased use of information technology. Among the basic benefits, usually emphasize: improved quality of service delivery, greater profitability and efficiency, rapid communications and reduce costs. Information technology, which is implemented in individual hotels, while described as a powerful generator impact on experience rating as a major factor in their satisfaction with the hotel product.

Digital technology and the Internet have caused huge changes in marketing and society in a very short time. Economic, political, cultural, economic and sociological discourses in recent years dominated by the term “information society,” which as the central lever of development and life of society emphasizes networking and

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information sharing. From that date, and versions are being developed “knowledge society,” “digital society,” “e-society” or “creative society,” sprang from “industrial society” or “modern” society, which is based no longer on the goods, than on services. It is in the above categories are classified tourist and catering industry, dominated by services, goods, or hybrid, while very few “pure” (material) products.

For these reasons, a further focus of the paper focuses on the application of Internet technology and the techniques of marketing in the hospitality industry.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNET AND INTERNET-BASED MARKETING

Information technologies nowadays are completely changed techniques of planning and implementation of e-marketing in hospitality. Apart from the supply side, the changes occur on the demand side, where consumers increasingly accept and apply new technologies in the hospitality industry.

Changes in information technology are both threatening and those that promote the ability of economic operators to develop long term relationships with its customers, thereby supporting relationship marketing. It allows customers direct contact with the business entity at any time of day or night, from any location, so that the buyer could collect the desired information and then make a purchase. This information can be personalized to the needs of individual customers. The Internet also allows buyers to easily find information about competitors’ products and services, just to give effect to the buyer. Businesses can also easily find new customers, while at the same time serve the existing ones using a database to develop a personal profile and are then directed to the processed information to identify specific customer needs.

Impacts of information technologies are seen on traditional methods and techniques of marketing, but it is also possible to speak of a completely new kind of marketing - e-marketing in hospitality. (Ruzic, Bilos & Turkalj, 2009)

Electronic business systems support a number of changes marketing system including:

- Standardized products,
- Increased competitive pressure in prices that results in lower prices,
- Shorter distribution channels dominated by the facilitator,
- Promotion of non-linear,
- Electronic transfer funds,
- Information management systems databases. (Frankel, 1998)

In e-business in the hospitality setting marketing strategy also starts with determining the long-term goals, and finding methods, processes and resources needed to realize these goals with minimal resource usage. The assumption is that the introduction of e-business to have an impact on the quality of services in the tourism and hospitality industry will use the technology to be competitive advantage over other market participants.

When planning the market performance of the tourist operators offer should bear in mind the major trends form Table 1 as evidenced by the market.

When it comes to hospitality and tourism market where exchanges are subject to a pure or hybrid property, agents often have to fend off new competitors, which customers access far more direct, ie via the Internet. Providing information via the Internet is extremely affected by the reduction in trading costs, providing a higher level of convenience and provides entirely new opportunities for quick connect buyers and sellers. This especially applies to various types of financial services, tourism and hospitality services, which