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Tourism Marketing: A Service Marketing perspective

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A Service Marketing perspective
Kannan Srinivasan

Abstract

Tourism is a service sector which earns a substantial foreign exchange to developing countries. In India, Kerala is one of the important destination for the international tourists with its unique nature beauty with backwaters, mountains and beaches. To make the tourism a great success one has to take advantage of the modern technology to full extent. Present paper is an attempt to market tourism by adapting the service marketing approach for achieving great success.

Kerala wins best state award for tourism

Kerala has won the best state award for tourism instituted by Union Government of India. It won seven of 2004 year's awards. It received the best eco-friendly project award for the Thenmala project, the best wildlife sanctuary award for Periyar wildlife sanctuary, for innovative use of IT in tourism. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism during the year 2000 were estimated at about Rs. 14,4080 Millions with an estimated direct employment of about 15 million, which is about 2.4% of the total labour force of the country. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner for India. The International tourist traffic in the country is estimated to be 2.64 million during the year 2000. According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), India's share in world tourism arrivals is only 0.38%, accounting for 0.62% of the world tourist receipts. This indicates that much of the tourist potential is yet to be tapped. Tourism has emerged as an industry next in importance only to Information Technology industry in the Services sector. By 2005, the contribution of Tourism to the world economy will be doubled.

Kerala

The monsoon season is visually appealing journey as “ When Heavens Touch the Earth”.

Kerala Revenue generated by tourism is assessed as 6.29% of the GDP the employment in tourism is estimated as 7 lakhs. Total investments worth over Rs.5000 Million has come into Kerala on account of the State's prioritizing the creation of basic infrastructure to support

tourism, adopting a policy that is eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable Kerala's Tourism Minister in 2003.

Tourism Marketing

Being a service product it has to adopt Service marketing principles.

Characteristics of Service Marketing

According to Lovelock, service marketing has four characteristics. They are, (a) Intangibility ie. Cannot be touched or viewed, (b) Inseparability of Production and consumption, (c) Perishability, ie. unused capacity cannot be stored for future use, Heterogeneity (Variability) ie. Services involve people, and people are all different.

Marketing mix for Tourism

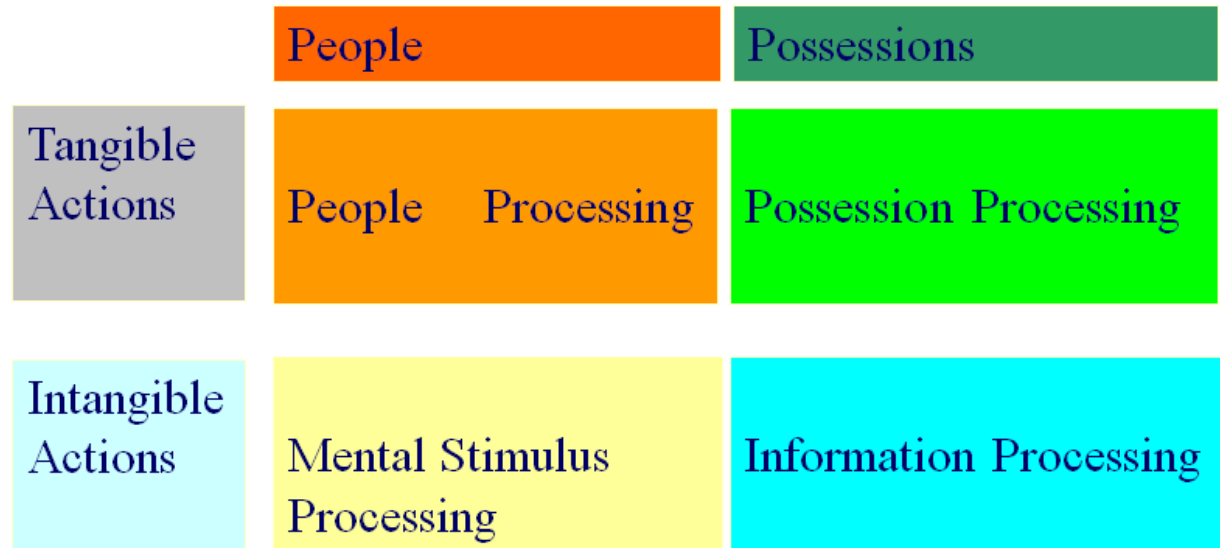
The marketing mix for any service industry is discussed as 8Ps. They are,

1. Product Elements
2. Process
3. Place and Time
4. Productivity and Quality
5. Promotion & Education
6. People
7. Price & other user costs
8. Physical Evidence

Differences between tourism marketing and other services

The marketing of services dependent much on interdependence of Marketing, Operations, and Human Resources. The differences between tourism marketing and other services are, (1) principal products provided by recreation/tourism businesses are recreational experiences and hospitality, (2) instead of moving product to the customer, the customer must travel to the product (area/community), (3) travel is a significant portion of the time and money spent in

association with recreational and tourism experiences, (4) is a major factor in people's decisions on whether or not to visit your business or community.



Nature of Service

Source: Lovelock et al, Services Marketing

Components of Tourism

Tourism has many components comprising

1. Travel experience
2. Accommodations
3. Food
4. Beverage services
5. Shops
6. Entertainment
7. Aesthetics and
8. Special events

Let us look at the 8 Ps in detail.

1. Product

Product in Tourism is basically the experience and hospitality provided by the service provided. In general the experience has to be expressed in such a way that the tourists see a value in them.

2. Process

The process in Tourism include, (a) trip planning and anticipation, (b) travel to the site/area, (c) recollection, (d) trip planning packages. The trip planning packages include, maps, attractions en route and on site, information regarding lodging, food, quality souvenirs and mementoes

3. Place and Time – Location and Accessibility

The place and time in tourism is providing directions and maps, providing estimates of travel time and distances from different market areas, recommending direct and scenic travel routes, identifying attractions and support facilities along different travel routes, and informing potential customers of alternative travel methods to the area such as airlines and railroads.

4. Productivity and Quality

This is similar to other service industries. The quality is assessed by time taken for a service, the promptness of the service, reliability and so on.

5. Promotion and Education

Like other services, the promotion should address, the accurate and timely information helping to decide whether to visit target audience, the image to be created for the organization, objectives, budget, timing of campaign, media to be selected, and evaluation methods.

6. People

People is the centre for Tourism. It is more a human intensive sector. For hospitality and guest relations it is very important to focus on people. It also plays a vital role in quality control, personal selling, and employee morale.

7. Price and other user costs

The price of the tourism services depend on business and target market objectives, cost of producing, delivering and promoting the product, willingness of the target, prices charged by

competitors offering similar product/service to the same target markets, availability and prices of substitute products/services, and economic climate. The possibility of stimulating high profit products/services by offering related services at or below cost.

8. Physical Evidence

In Tourism the physical evidence is basically depends on travel experience, stay, and comfort. Here, the core product is bed in case of stay.

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