The Role of Electronic Customer Relationship Management in Tourism in Chabahar City, IRAN

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ABSTRACT

One of the best means of enhancing quality in today’s world is to make optimal use of information technology based on customer satisfaction approaches. In this study, we seek to investigate the role of customer relationship management through new information technology and electronic tools. One of the drawbacks of tourism in Iran, especially in remote and disadvantaged areas such as Chabahar, is lack of customer satisfaction principle. The aim of this study is to investigate the use of electronic communication management tools for customers in the field of E-tourism that through integrating these two areas, the processes of customer relationship management in tourism is defined. on the other hand, customer relationship management plays a key role in e-tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Corporates are satisfying the needs of third millennium and enhancing customer value and satisfaction through analysis of their behavior and life cycles. The tools and technology of database, data analysis and other techniques for customer relationship management in tourism are methods providing new commercial opportunities.

Today’s world dimensions are retrieved from rapid and extensive developments in technology and globalization that caused many changes in industry and tourism which in turn bring about extensive changes and evolution in the field of service industries. There is no doubt that all countries around the world are competing to utilize the economic, social and cultural advantages of this industry, especially to obtain a greater share of income and employment caused by developing this industry in their respective countries. Thus, through an analytical perspective we will figure out that the efforts made by most countries are based on sustainable development and stability, in other words, these two cases are our economic, social and cultural expectations towards tourism, also note that the capabilities and potentials for improving lifestyle have great impacts in tourism and we cannot investigate tourism opportunities merely based on facts and figures. The fact that quality privileges over quantity should be applied in tourism in order to improve the quality of transport, hospitality, attendance and residency so we can provide better services because the future of tourism depends on quality enhancement.

We cannot ignore the impacts of customer-oriented view or the customers behavior on product-oriented view since we can figure out the customers’ expectations through collecting data and deciding based on the hidden patterns between data by means of data analysis tools.

Customer Relationship Management:

Customer Relationship Management History:

The history for emergence of discussions relating customer satisfaction management may be divided into three time periods (Akhavan-Nasab, 2010; Shahraki & Davarpanah, 2009):

Industrial Revolution Period:

Fords innovation in applying mass production techniques instead of manual production method is one of the prominent characteristics of this period. Although change in production methods caused the selection range of customers to become limited (in relation to handicraft products), but the products of new methods have lower...
costs. In other words, in selecting mass production by Ford, improving efficiency and economic gain were the most important factors.

Quality Revolution Period:
This period coincides with the initiative made by Japanese companies based on continuous improvement process; this in turn leads to higher quality and lower costs for products. This era reached its peak level with the advent of new quality management methods such as TQM. With the increasing number of firms competing against each other and flourishing culture, retaining and improving the quality of products are no longer advantages in competitions and the need for new methods to retain competition advantage is felt.

Customer Revolution Period:
Regarding the increased number of customers in this era, the manufacturers were required to produce their goods with lower costs, higher qualities and more variety; in other words, manufacturers were forced to not only producing goods but also finding ways to attract customers and retain their satisfaction.

Definition of Customer Relationship Management:
Levin describes customer relationship management as applying information and knowledge about customers in order to deliver goods and services to them. Thompson (2000) describes customer relationship management as a cultural and professional philosophy that supports the processes of providing services, sales and marketing more effectively. Kincaid defined customer satisfaction management as strategic implication of data, process, information technology and people in order to customer-organization relationship management which as a beneficiary business philosophy in the known areas and potential customers, he believes customer relationship management is an improved process of information technology that recognizes, develops and integrates different capacities of customers and emphasizes to provide higher value for the customers (Shahraki et al, 2010).

Customer Relationship Management Goals:
For surviving in world market focusing on customer relationship management is important. Customer relationship management establishment has many goals as mentioned below (Keramati, 2008):

Customer Recognition:
a- collecting complete information about customer
b- analyze customer data
c- attracting new customers
d- improve employees skills
e- improve customer relationship management techniques
1.1.1 customer interactions
a- correct response to customer requests
b- business process integration
c- improve communication channels management
d- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational operations

Customer Value:
a- improve customer retention
b- increase profits
c- improve customer services
d- creating a virtual space on the internet
1.3.4 customer satisfaction
a- improve quality of customer services
b- communicate with customers

Electronic Customer Relationship Management:
Definition of Electronic Customer Relationship Management:
Although customer management is a central issue in marketing science, yet its nature is not completely accepted by the theorists. According to zabklah et al, this view in many different aspects has the capacity of a technologic process, strategy and philosophy. In other words, Kellen described customer relationship management as “a commercial strategy to gain long-term competition advantage through optimal timing and quality delivered to the customer and eliciting commercial value at the same time.” In other words, it’s some sort of win-win approach by which customers and firms achieve what they want through a more powerful bond with each other. Also, from the conceptual evaluation viewpoint, during past years, customer relationship
management has changed drastically due to the evolutions caused by transfer and acceptance of technology, as long as we consider customer relationship management as a commercial process based on effective relationship management, the orientation of technology will be one of the most important components of this kind of management (Mirfakhredini, 2009).

**Electronic Customer Relationship Management Purposes Goals:**

The advantages of applying customer relationship management system which aims at attracting customer satisfaction and remaining in the competition are as follows:

- Designing and implementing an effective marketing method
- Determining sales method
- Analysis of customer behavior regarding products and services
- Management decisions

Recognizing risks toward customer relationship management is not merely confined to software and hardware. It also include business processes based on customer-oriented strategies supported by various software (Mo’ezi, 2009: 16).

**Tourism:**

**Definition of Tourism:**

Tourism refers to a set of activities occurred during traveling of a tourist. This process involves all sorts of activity including traveling, staying, returning and even recalling the memories. Also, activities as part of the trip such as purchasing various goods and interactions between host and guest are other sort of these activities. Generally, all sorts of activity and interactions during a trip can be considered as tourism (Lumsdon, 2009).

**Types of Tourists:**

Fig 1 shows the classification of tourists

![Fig. 1: Classification of tourists (source: World Tourism Organization 1993).](image)

E-tourism consisted of utilization on modern technology to provide required services for tourists. Providing required services for tourists is easy, efficient and costless using information technology. In fact, e-tourism is to provide all sorts of services electronically.

There are too many services offered in e-tourism including:

- direct reservation of hotel, recreational centers and …
- reservation and delivery of air and train tickets
- reservation of vehicle for rent for transportation during the trip

**The Impacts of Customer Relationship in Tourism:**

**Softwares being used by customer relationship management in tourism industry:**

There are many software in the tourism industry that the most common ones are:
Customer relationship management software Terrasoft: This software has customization capabilities for medium-sized businesses in the tourism industry and is able to provide with product information, sales, project and task management with ease and it can be used as a search engine for information.

Customer relationship management software Excentrium: this software has better capabilities for managing e-mails, meetings, tasks and contacts with the aid of reports, forms and other tasks of customer relationship management. It has the capability of sales management and marketing in order to achieve a better management of visitors.

Travel Web Works: a software designed to attract more customers and improving satisfaction and loyalty through creating a powerful link with travel agencies and tourists. Also, customers can use the reservation motor to search and save a specific travel and retrieve it after a while.

Chabahar and its Tourism Attractions:

Chabahar City Attractions and Tourist Attractions:

Chabahar is one of the south-eastern cities of Iran, Sistan and Baluchestan province and is the only ocean port in Iran which is located in the coasts of Oman sea. Its harbor has the capacity for intercontinental ships and is one of free commercial zones of Iran. Port of Chabahar, is the closest way to Afghanistan, Kirgizistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Chabahar in addition to commercial occasions, has many historical and recreational attractions. The other important aspect of this city is building harbors, railroad to central Asia and international airport. This harbor is one of the main south to north harbors in world trade.

- **Bahu Kalat River**

  Bahu Kalat is one of the main rivers of the province and the main reason of life in southern Baluchestan. This river collects the waters from a vast area of southern Iran-shahr and Chabahar and ends in Oman Sea. Bahu Kalat in 90 kms east of Chabahar reaches the Guater Gulf of the Oman Sea. This river has significant importance especially because of being the settlement for Iranian crocodile. The ecological situations in this river is changing as it can be said that the soil and water ecosystems are merged in this region.

- **Gulf of Chabahar**

  The Gulf of Chabahar with unique effects of sunrise and sunset in the Sea which is Undoubtedly the most picturesque sunrises and sunsets unmatched in the country is one of the tourism attractions in this city.

- **Fishing Docks**

  In Chabahar, there are several fishing docks that (Tis) and (Remin) are the most spectacular docks. Tis is located in free commercial regions and Remin is located 10 km east of chabahar. The sight of fishing ships and boats and hunting fishes and shrimps is very amazing.

- **Rocky Shore**

  In Chabahar which is the only ocean port there is a region called rocky shore. The sight of ocean waves colliding the rocks, different types of crabs and turtles are all very spectacular.

- **Gol-Feshan**

  In the distance between Kahir and Tong and 20 kms away from kahir village there are three 10 to 20 meters high hills, two of them are now inactive but one is still spouting mud that this phenomenon is only reported from three distinct locations in the world.

- **Lipaar Pond**

  15 km away from Chabahar in the coastal road of guater there is a rock next to a lofty valley that the lipaar village can be seen from atop. In between two mountains not very far from each other, there is a levee that collects the water from the vicinity and it stretches out over 14 kms. In this levee there are many kinds of shrubs and trees which makes it a lovely sight. There are many species of birds living in this area.

- **Tis Shore**

  In the road from Kenarak to Chabahar and in five kms to the city lies tis shore with eye-catching bowers. This shore has a very shallow water about 1.5 meters to the hundreds meters off shore.

- **Short-snouted crocodile**

  Short-snouted crocodile is the most renown species in Chabahar ecosystem. Part of its natural habitat called gandoo by the natives is located in Chabahar and the other part is in iranshahr. This crocodile which is the most rare species of crocodile in the world lives in bahu kalat and Sarbaz river.

- **Archeological and historical works**

  Chabahar has several historical artifacts: tis village and historical harbor, portages castle atop a hill 5 km away from Chabahar, Seyed Gholam Rasul shrine in shilat shahr, tis stone shrines, Shahbazband Ruins, old British telegraph building, English deeps are among archeological and historical locations in Shabahar.

- **Free trade zone**

  The main part is build within a location of 230 acres consisting many malls, workshop and banks.

- **Chabahar Port**

  Chabahar port as an important port is located in southern Iran and northerm gulf of oman. This harbor has a
significant position in Iran’s trade with other countries due to the access to free international waters. On the other hand, this port due to vicinity to the adjacent countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and middle Asia with connection to the rail network will play a more important role in the country’s transit. Also, this port as the only ocean port of Iran, is one of the key locations in Persian gulf and gulf of oman and plays an important role in south-north corridor. This port is also located in the east-west transit route and hence has another aspect of importance.

The Impacts of Information Technology in Tourist Attraction in the City of Chabahar:

Arguably one of the most successful aspects of Information Technology is E-tourism. Nowadays, information technology is an important factor in tourism industry. Today, e-tourism services are provided with most firms involving tourism industry including air companies, hotels, trains, car rent agencies and travel agencies. In this respect, travel guiding firms are collecting information about travel and tourist spots and provide tourists with such information. This makes a competition advantage for air companies, hotels, trains and etc whose activities are based in electronic communication. Using information technology will decrease the costs for commissions and trade through the use of direct marketing. This technology provides the access to required information in any time and place which was not provided in traditional tourism methods.

Conclusion:

According to what was mentioned about tourism, it requires tourism centers to pay more attention to customer relationship management and electronic customer relationship management. Constant relationship with tourists is the most important topics in marketing and in order to obtain a successful tourism industry and completion attractiveness we must pay more attention to such cases. Increasing the quality of services provided by tourism centers has an important role in the industry. Quality enhancement must include all aspects of tourism including hospitality, residence, issuing tickets, transport etc.

Although, the presence of technology and softwares cannot prevail the lack of quality, knowledge, facilities and leaders, but this technology can be conducted in the right direction through adaptation and the use of human resource capabilities to provide tourists with higher quality of service.

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