

# International tourism and hotel management

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International Tourism and Hotel Management inserts his/hers The guest cycle involves 5 major stages including pre-arrival, arrival, occupancy, departure and post-departure which represent the points of contact and points of financial exchanges between the guests and various service centers involved in facilitating guest's lodging (Cooper, 2012). The pre-arrival stage pertains to the stage when the guest decides which hotel to lodge in (Cooper, 2012). This involved pre-purchase evaluation and the guests' decision may be influenced by various factors such as prior experience with the hotel, promotional activity undertaken by the hotel, word-of-mouth advertising from friends, colleagues and others, the hotel's goodwill and most importantly the ease with which reservations can be made along with the attitude and efficiency displayed by the front office employees. Reservations may be made via electronic means or through travel agents (Cooper, 2012). Revenue management and forecasting the estimated costs, duration and revenue from potential customers are crucial for the hotel during this stage. Upon successful reservation the scheduling of tasks and activities takes place which is followed by arrival of the guest (Cooper, 2012). This is a critical stage since staff at the front desk creates a first impression of the company (hotel) at this point. The guest is either escorted to the hotel via hotel shuttle or arrives through public transportation. Upon greeting, luggage assistance is provided to the guest who then checks-in upon payment. After this financial exchange takes place, the registration process takes place with confirmation of departure, carrying of luggage to the room and issuance of the room key (Cooper, 2012). During this phase it is crucial for the hotel to demonstrate that amenities are available. The atmosphere, ambience, cleanliness, synchronization of tasks

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as well as mannerism of the staff play a vital role in ensuring that the customer has a satisfying experience. Upon reaching the occupancy stage, the front desk must coordinate effectively and efficiently with personnel for guest services including those pertaining to laundry, butler service, bar, poolside facilities, security and business centre to ensure smooth operation (Cooper, 2012). This is when accounting procedures pertaining to making entries to the ledger and guest credit management are implemented. Relationship management between the staff and guest is strongest during this stage. Finally, upon the guests' departure, a summative evaluation takes place where payment is processed, departure list is created, and the satisfaction level of customer is assessed along with provision of necessary transport and assistance with luggage. Once the customer has left, a guest history is retained for record purposes along with receiving payments from parties such as credit card companies, travel agents and others (Cooper, 2012). Customer relationship management ensures that there are follow-ups with the customer, such as through company promotions. Continuous quality management is ensured as operations are reviewed, problem areas are identified and corrective measures are taken. Business trends are also identified.

2. Leiper has defined tourism as a system comprising of an integrated set of components that indicate traveler flows and relationships (see Appendix 1). It focuses on both the demand side and supply side flows by breaking down tourism into three areas: tourism generating regions (TGR), Transit Regions (TR) and Tourism Destination Regions (TDR) (Cooper, 2012). TGR represents the areas that supply tourists. This has meaningful insights for tourism firms as Tourism Product Distribution Systems (TPDS) are used to encourage travel amongst tourists, market opportunities for such

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travel and allow customers to make reservations for travel, sightseeing, lodging and visiting other tourist attractions at the point of destination (Cooper, 2012). In other words, knowing the region where tourists come from enables companies to target these customers effectively by altering the motivations and behavior of customers. TR represents the path these tourists take to travel and comprises of departing and returning tourists (Cooper, 2012). Tourist companies can alter the pattern of traveler flows here. Finally, TDR represents the places that are visited by tourists (Cooper, 2012). The customers' experience depends on the security offered, the attitude that locals display towards tourists, availability of facilities and comfort, quality of attractions as well as the promotional strategy that the destination has adopted. Pull factors or instances of stimulating tourist demand for the destination plays an important role here. For instance, countries such as Malaysia (" Truly Asia"), Thailand and Australia actively promote their region as popular tourist destinations which generates positive attitude towards these destinations amongst travelers. Not only is tourism affected by the external environment but also influences it. For instance, relations between countries improve by virtue of training programs under tourist programs. Furthermore, there is a need to develop sustainable tourism here through involving the local community in tourism activities in a way that it benefits from the activities and ensuring continued tourism in that destination by successful deployment of resources. Destinations can attract tourism by developing and building on historical cultural attractions, effective advertising, developing favorable infrastructure and train local staff to value cultural diversity. Overall, the systems approach suggests that tourism operates as an open system whereby dynamic changes in the socio-

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cultural, economic and political environments can impact all three components in the system. As the tourism activities become more complex with newer packages and tours, it is important to integrate the demand and supply side factors to provide a holistic view that enables tourism companies to correctly plan and execute their strategies. It enables firms to identify the problems in each component and correct them because they can spill over to other parts in the system. Furthermore, this systems approach incorporates all scales of tourism ranging from local to international level. As suggested above, this also has important implications for tourist marketing as it addresses pull factors (including travelers' motivations) and push factors (including factors that drive the travelers towards that destination).

Reference Cooper, C. (2012). Essentials of tourism. New York : Pearson

Financial Times/Prentice Hall. Appendix 1 Leiper's model of tourism system