Visitor attraction management

Introduction

This report focuses on Ocean Park of Hong Kong, which was launched in 1977. It is one of the largest amusement parks in the world. It is an animal theme park that is located in the southern district of Hong Kong (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2010). It has a total of 35 rides and attractions. Over the years the park has grown a small park to its current global status. It has won numerous awards including the 33rd most visited park in the world and the world's seventh most popular amusement park in the world by Forbes (Peng, 2010). It was also awarded the 15th most popular theme parks in the world. In 2008 the ocean park received a total of 5. 04 million visitors (Anton Clave, 2007).

Core resources, products, and stakeholders at the visitor attraction

The park has an extensive land covering up to 870, 000 square meters; this is its greatest resource. The park is separated by a mountain into two parts; the waterfront and the summit. Both areas can be reached by an Ocean Express, a long cable car system, and a shuttle bus. Different products are provided within the park (Dewhurst, Thwaites & Walmsley, 2014). The park has 19 rides which also includes two roller coasters. Furthermore, the theme park consists of more than ten animal exhibits. Some of these animals include the jellyfish, the Giant Panda habitat, and a four-story aquarium that has over 2, 000 different types of fish and a Chinese sturgeon aquarium among other animal habitats (Swarbrooke & Page, 2012).

The ocean park also operates as an observatory besides being an amusement park. It also operates well-developed laboratories, dolphin and whales fund and also an education center (Jefferson, 2000). Other products

provided in the park include theater shows, Whisker's Harbor, Headlines Rides, Tai Shu Wan Entrance and Lowland Gardens. Watching the tropical fish and the pandas make tourists feel excited, relaxed and entertained. They also give a sense of peacefulness. Besides the tropical fish being kept for tourism purposes, they are also protecting the marine life. Pandas resemble human beings to some extent, and this easily excites and gives joy to tourists. Moreover, they are also kept with an aim of protecting the animal life. The hair raiser roller coaster and the cable car are also attraction sites at the park. They are great and safe. They provide thrills and stomach-churning rides. Furthermore, it provides a beautiful aerial view of the Hong Kong Island.

The success of the ocean park is attributed to particular stakeholders, who ensure the sustainability of the park. Some of the key stakeholders in the park include the Hong Kong government, the visitors, employees of the ocean park Corporation and the Home Affairs Bureau. All these stakeholders work in collaboration in one or another to ensure the wellbeing of the park. As much as these stakeholders have been thriving to foster the growth of the park, some people interfere with the attainment of the park; s mission and purpose. They include activist groups, trade unions and associations and competitors who struggle to regain the market share.

The key management and visitor management issues encountered at the

Visitor attraction

Despite Ocean Park steadily growing over the years, management operations at the park has not been a quiet walk on the aisle. The park has

been faced with numerous visitor and management issues that have consistently affected the daily operations at the park. The success of the park has always been pegged by how the management handles these issues. The major management challenge at the ocean park is the inconsistency in visitor numbers (Burn, 1997). The park in 2004 was ranked as the third most visited park in the world, however, in the recent years, the figures have decreased substantially. The reduced mainland visitor arrivals at the park are coupled with an unexpected competition from other parks from other regions such as in Asia. Climate change is another major issue facing the ocean park in Hong Kong. The earth; s climate is fast changing and these a negative impact on the park. Changes in precipitation at the park have pushed some species out of the park to other regions where the climate is favorable. Similarly, fire seasons also affect the animals and plants at the park (Fyall, 2008). The management has received a lot of criticism from wildlife advocates for some of their practices. Some of the practices that are greatly refuted are the caption of large sea animals like the orca and the dolphins.

The presentation of shows showcasing these animals performing has also been criticized. People capture and sell these animals to marine parks; the result is reduced animal population and also threatening their existence. Adjacent developments around the park also affect the existence of the animals. Some parts of the park are grabbed and used for development of infrastructure and human settlement. By so doing the habitat for the animals and the plants are destroyed and consequently, their existence tampers with (Swarbrooke, 2001). Foreign invaders are another management challenge

that hinders growth at the park. The park; s management has experienced instances poaching, intentional importation of animal species such as snake are imported for the exotic pet trade (Richards, 2012). Despite the strict security at the park, such instances are still common and are a major challenge and are affecting the animal numbers at the park. Therefore, to for the ocean park to continue thriving, the management has to manage these issues effectively.

Management tools that have been put in place to manage the resource and visitors at the Ocean Park Hong Kong

Just like any other visitor attraction site, Ocean Park Hong Kong has put in place various management tools to assist them to offer quality services to their visitors. This management tools that are applied at the park are also aimed at managing the resources at the park. It is no doubt that the efficient use of these management tools has been the reason why the park has been able to make positive changes and actions. These tools have enabled the management to define and execute various strategies as well as engaging the visitors who visit the park and also the employees. The performance of the park can also be easily monitored. The management tools that have been used in the park to manage visitors and resources are strategic planning, benchmarking and balanced scorecard.

Strategic planning has been for a long time used by the management at the park to manage its resources and also the visitors. In 2005, the park had become unprofitable and that had forced the management to only major on what was vital for the park. The number of visitors that visited the park had

reduced so much. This meant that the funds that the park was used to greatly reduced. This also had an impact on the other resources. It is strategic planning that has been effectively used to make the Park the largest park in Asia (Ruggles, 2009). Strategic planning has enabled the park to be able to avoid the time and other resources on some of the things that add no great impact on the park. Strategic planning made by the park has enabled the management to allocate their resources effectively to what they exactly need. This has made the park expand and also attract more visitors from different parts of the world. Communication has been essential in carrying out this management tool.

Another management tool that has been used in managing the resources at the [park, as well as the visitors, is the balanced scorecard. Balance scorecard has assisted the management of the Ocean Park Hong Kong to easily execute their strategies by (1) monitoring the strategy execution of the park with relevant and meaningful key performance indicators. (2) Assisting them to come up with a simple one-page strategy map that shows essential strategic objectives that they need to achieve, and (3) it has ensured that the correct action plans are always in place so that the strategic priorities of the park are followed. In ensuring that the visitors at the park are maintained and that new visitors keep on coming to the park, the strategic planning, and the strategic execution is handled as a unit (Rigby, 2001). This explains why the park has been able to transform their strategies into actions. These management tools have assisted the park at all economic climates since engaging in only what is essential has helped in

the management of the resources as well as the management of the visitors at the park.

Benchmarking has also assisted the management of the park to take good care of the visitors and also manage the resources of the park. Benchmarking as management tools go hand-in-hand with balanced scorecard. This is because the key performance indicators are used in the generation of essential insights when they are only compared with the benchmarks and targets. The park has been able to compare the park units and the departments of other parks in the universe (Bign;, Andreu ; Gnoth, 2005). Through this, they have been able to learn some of the ways in which can help them attract more visitors at the park and also some of the best ways in which they can manage their resources. These management tools explain the great success of the Ocean Park Hong Kong. They have been effectively applied.

Recommendations for improved management at Ocean Park Hong Kong

Despite the success of the park, there are still sectors that the park can do better if certain improvements are made. It is the management of the park that has a lot to dictate on the performance of the bank. It is therefore very essential to perfect the management.

Marine Mammal Park, amusement park, and the oceanarium park are some of the major parks that form the Ocean Park Hong Kong. Therefore, the animals that are in these parks should be exposed to the best conditions possible so that they can look more attractive. Making them look attractive will attract more visitors. Various products within the park are used by the

visitors. The management should take it their responsibility to ensure that these products are well maintained (Milman, 2001). These products should be improved so that they can suit the diversity of the visitors that visit the park. All these will assist in increasing the number of the visitors that will be coming to the park.

The management should also treat staffing as an essential part of their duty. They should ensure that the employees that are recruited to the park have a broad knowledge about the park and the animals that are in the park. They should have the ability to guide the visitors within the park. The management should also ensure that they engage in continuous talks with the employees. This will help them be aware of the challenges the employees face and the recommendations that can be done to improve the performance of the park. Furthermore, for visitor management, the employees have a role to play. The manner in which the park employees will handle the visitors will determine the flow of the visitors at the park. To keep the flow positive, the management should introduce programs to educate the employees on how they can manage the visitors (Jigang, 1997). The management can also engage in intense advertising to market the park to the rest of the world. However, the management should also be aware that the quality of the services they offer plays a role in their marketing.

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