

The museum and art gallery kelvingrove tourism essay



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The current study analyzes the visitor operations and experience in a detailed manner for Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. The visitor operations and experience is handled in the current study in four different perspectives namely: Marketing Perspective, Management Perspective, Operations perspective and Quality Perspective. Marketing perspective starts with the approach of marketing strategies using 4 P's technique for understanding the prevailing strategies for the organizations. Then, using the mentioned strategies the study shifts to the Kelvingrove museum art and gallery analysis for marketing strategies. Management perspective follows the marketing perspective analysis specific to Kelvingrove with the factors that influence the management success or failure. Then, it analyses the key functions that are implemented by the management of Kelvingrove in the art gallery with respect to the staff and the visitors' experience. Third perspective that deals with the visitors' attractions and the operational activities that are performed in general is operational perspective. The second part of this deals with the analysis of how Kelvingrove manages the operations effectively that made them successful. The next part is to concentrate on the quality perspective which is being carried out in all the organizations but which is the key factor that needs to be taken utter care for performing in higher levels of standard. This is analyzed for Kelvingrove using the famous technique of SERVQUAL method. The current study then highlights the recommendations which though minor needs to be followed up by the museum organizations to be in a better position. Then, the study ends with the limitations to the current study which can be further studied if those were not restricted.

INTRODUCTION

The Museum and Art Gallery, Kelvingrove is run by the Culture and Leisure Services Department of Glasgow City Council. The Museum is housed in an impressive Category A listed building which was first opened in 1901 as part of the International Exhibition and is one of Glasgow's landmarks.

Kelvingrove is the most visited museum outside London, receiving over one million visitors a year in the last five years (Scottish Tourist Board).

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is an excellent place to visit with a vast collection of masterpieces of various people (Top-ten-Glasgow-guide, 2009).

Marketing Perspective

Philip Kotler (2008: 17) defines marketing as 'satisfying needs and wants through an exchange process'. Marketing is an integrated process through which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. Marketing is not just about selling. Peter Drucker (2004: 34) explained, "The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. [It] ... is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself. Ideally, marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy." In addition the marketing management should be innovative while product development and calculating the added value. This would also ensure that the short run needs and long run requirements are balanced to meet the customer requirements and yield profits (Swarbroke, 1999: 218).

In the current study, we focus on marketing visitor attractions. A visitor attraction can be defined as 'somewhere worth leaving home for' and this is

as relevant to a single museum or cathedral as it is to a town or place. In a successful visitor attraction, the product on offer is the experience itself, spending money on that experience must be worthwhile. In the experience economy, the visitor attractions must continuously reinvent itself to have repeat visits and survive. This economy of experience is about quality, service and choice - it is not about size. Successful visitor attractions of whatever size sells memories, experiences and expectations to individual customers. Hence it is important to have the right marketing mix for the product you are trying to sell. The term marketing mix refers to the primary elements that must be attended to in order to properly market a product or service. Also known as The 4 Ps of Marketing, the marketing mix is a very useful, if a bit general, guideline for understanding the fundamentals of what makes a good marketing campaign. (Hooley, 2008: 45-60).

Four Ps Strategies:

Product: A visitor attraction will have many different products on offer namely the permanent collection, temporary exhibitions, special events and educational resources for schools, colleges and universities. In addition to this, there are products such as the membership schemes, gift shops, cafes and corporate hire facilities.

Place: Place is the location where the products or the customer's output is ready for use. There are two key factors that a museum or a visitor attraction promotes with regards to its location:

Excellent transport links by bus and train.

Easy ticket booking facilities available onsite or online.

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Price: Price impacts strongly on how businesses fare competitively (Diamantopoulos et al., 1995). Hence price is considered as the key element in the marketing mix. There are different factors that affect pricing decisions for marketers namely organizational and marketing objectives; pricing objectives; costs; remaining marketing mix variables; channel member expectations; buyer's perceptions; competition; legal and regulatory issues and perceived value. The following three aspects need to cover while determining price: standard admission fee, discounts on admission fee (discount percentage and conditions) and concessions provided mainly in public sector attractions to disadvantaged people.

Promotion: This aspect of the marketing mix represents the possible tools used to communicate with and attract the target audiences. These can include:

Advertising – paying for adverts in newspapers, magazines and radio, and on poster sites

Print – producing banners, posters, leaflets and other items, and arranging distribution. Leaflets are sent to places such as libraries, tourist information offices, cafes and other places likely to be visited by the campaign's target audience.

Direct mail – sending leaflets or other print with a letter to named individuals, using in-house data bases or external lists of names which are either researched or bought.

Sales promotion and brand partnerships – promotions include offering prizes or discounts on tickets in collaboration with other parties, from newspapers and magazines to rail networks and coffee shops. Partnerships could involve window displays in shops, or branded giveaways.

New media – e-newsletters and website features

Public relations (Kevin, 1994: 20)

In this context, Kelvingrove has done a fantastic job in being the most popular museum in U. K outside London through its effective marketing plan. For the management, the key the primary challenge has been to encourage repeat visits and Kelvingrove has successfully done so with new advanced features or quality improvements. Kelvingrove successfully underwent a re-development of its displays and visitor facilities. At Kelvingrove there are 200, 000 objects with only 20, 000 on display at any time within the gallery. After the refurbishment 50% more items are on display to the public. Lot of efforts have gone to ensure that Kelvingrove meets all the requirements pertaining to security, humidity control and lighting to attract major tours to Glasgow. Working on feedback from researchers who identified that a very large number of visitors to the gallery never left the ground floor, marketing experts have ensured that public gets more back space and have all the information to find way around the gallery. A Formal Educational Space for children and Children's' Discovery Centers and developments like these will be a major boost to schools, colleges and universities in and around Glasgow. The acquisition of knowledge is supported at various levels and the gallery is geared up for those who wish to explore subjects in more detail

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with support from staff with the availability of quiet self-study areas. At Kelvingrove there is now an Object Cinema and 22 themed galleries focusing on 100 different stories. These wonderful features are supported by an effective promotional campaign through vibrant brochures and hand-outs. Since, it's an icon by itself, not much is spent on advertising through media. The museum sponsors for many events including sports and cultural activities. Kelvingrove uses the approach of newspapers and posters which is a modest way for marketing. The museum sponsors many events including sports and cultural activities and hosts various exhibitions. It has also maintained its reach to the public through its website which is always providing updated and relevant information to potential visitors. These are the marketing strategies that Kelvingrove marketers follow.

Figure: Goma Family Festival, 2009

(Source: Glasgow museums, what's on for families?)

Management Perspective:

The management has indirect impact on the visitors' experience at the attractions. It directly impacts the employee attitudes and job satisfaction. The visitor management is the key aspect for the management to handle in different scenarios namely during the visit and before the visit. Museum and art galleries are defined by International Council of Museums as a non-profit institution, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity

and its environment for the purposes of education, entertainment and study' (ICOM Statutes art. 3 para. 1, 2007) .

One of the major causes of dissatisfaction is connected with the process of management. Many of the staff members (employees) feel that their managers do not know how to manage because of the conflicting agenda or cause of stress and frustration. Better management skills and training would be valuable for overcoming these problems. Museums have a potential valuable resource where many managers appear to enjoy the creative aspects of their work. Here development and implementation of the required skills is an important issue. (Swarbroke, 1999: 50).

MANAGEMENT STYLE:

Management in all business areas and human organization activity is the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals and objectives.

Management comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing, and controlling an organization (a group of one or more people or entities) or effort for the purpose of accomplishing a goal. Resourcing encompasses the deployment and manipulation of human resources, financial resources, technological resources, and natural resources. This is very much the case in places of visitor attractions as well. Good management may not be the measure of a good museum, but...would most certainly appear to be one of its critical prerequisites (Weil and Cheit, 1994: 289). A well-managed museum is one in which:

- Everyone has a clear idea of the purpose of his or her work and its value to the museum;

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- Staff works to a plan which has been devised for their area;
- Clear procedures are followed for the activities which they undertake; and
- Each section of the museum is involved in, and is responsible for, the efficient operation of its area. (Shostack, 1985: 25).

Museum management can have different emphasis regarding service delivery depending on the prevailing management styles. The two different management styles are the custodial management and the market focused management. A successful museum management may require the right balance of the two styles. Recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of the museum experience and consideration of the values of both the roles is vital for the effective management of a museum. (Leask & Yeoman, 1999: 38-42)

At Kelvingrove the management has done an excellent job in utilizing the resources and capabilities at their disposal to make Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum Scotland's busiest visitor attraction last year according to VisitScotland. It excels in a number of areas a few of which are discussed below:

Aesthetically displayed exhibits:

Kelvingrove Museum has always enjoyed a unique position of its own in the world of heritage museums and recently with its imaginative and empathetic redesigning it has become more appealing to art lovers. Be it the gallant and fragile Spitfire hanging by a thread to show how desperately perilous those wartime raids must have been, the 40-foot dinosaur of the Rennie Mackintosh rooms or the story of the Scots POWs who painted icons on

sacks: each of them keep you hooked with odd life-art juxtapositions and the credit goes to none other than the management team who has done a fantastic job in their maintenance. And with the recent reinvention, the museum has become much more organized than before. The doors now open in the basement. That's the first of the changes. One enters through chic white vaults glowing with red and blue landing light and ascends by stairways fluttering with fabulous birds. The restaurant is a glass pavilion. The clutter of corridors has been rationalized. Light dances more brightly round the vast halls now that the grime of a century has been scoured away to reveal brilliant blond sandstone. And a third more space has been created in which to display - stunningly lit, in jewel-colored rooms - nearly twice as many objects. Thus we see that quality has been the foremost focus of the management of Kelvingrove museum and the aim has always been to provide its visitors a life changing experience (Policy & Strategic Planning, Glasgow Museums).

Organizational Structure: A flat organizational structure ensures that communication is fast across levels and resolutions of operational and management issues take place at a quicker pace. It is a three tier structure with the deputy director heading the management. Furthermore the Culture and Sport Glasgow, which is responsible for museums in Glasgow, reports to a Board of 11 Directors, which comprises six elected members, four independent Directors and the Chief Executive of Culture and Sport Glasgow.

Cross Functional Efficiencies: Functional units within the museum instead of working independently interacts and co-ordinates with each other to

promote the museum and help the management to achieve their objectives.
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For instance the marketing department works along with the IT department to reach out to potential and incumbent visitors. Through various online and print publications and also through the website, relevant information about the museum and events surrounding it is made available to the general public.

Supporting Activities:

The management has also taken significant steps in providing various activities to the general public apart from the viewing of the museum. These range from general facilities like parking, cafe/restaurant, shops, guide assistance dogs to facilities for hosting corporate, and private events. There is also a Centre of New Enlightenment (TCoNE) designed for young people aged from 10 to 14 years. It uses state-of-the-art equipment and dramatic presentations to explore the museum and its collections and help young people discover their potential. It has an Object Cinema

located on the first floor. It is a multi-media centre using video, sound and lighting to tell the story behind a single object or a group of objects. The content will change on a regular basis.

Thus we see that the management has taken utmost care of providing the most pleasant experience to visitors at Kelvingrove Art gallery and Museum and continuously tries to improve their service.

Operations perspective:

In visitors attractions operations management can be defined as a day to day management of the site. Although it appears to be a simple task of

managing the site it involves many internal processes, which will help to manage the attraction more efficiently and effectively (Swarbrooke, 2002). According to Rogers & Slinn (1993) cited in (Swarbrooke, 2002), " operations management is concerned with the design, operation and control of the system that matches the organisations resources to customer service needs". According to Slack, Chambers et al. (1995) cited in Leask & Yeoman (1999), resources can be classified into transformed resources which can be transformed or converted and transforming resources which will act upon the transformed resources. Transformed resources include materials, information and customers where as the transforming resources include facilities and staff. Operations management mainly concentrates more on using the available transforming resources like staff and machinery to provide an efficient service for the customers. In visitor attractions effective management of operations will help in smooth and efficient operation of the site. Every one working within the site will be directly or indirectly involved in operation management (Swarbrooke, 2002). Generally operations management deals with real people and real issues within a practical environment. In visitors attractions operations management deals with many tasks like

Design of the site.

Management of visitors and capacity management.

Staff training.

Monitoring quality issues.

The operations within an attraction site vary depending upon the organisation or its customer point of view (Leask & Yeoman, 1999). From an organisation perspective operations management generally concentrates on increasing the visitor's opportunities in the site, staff and visitor's safety, low operational costs, looking after visitors with special needs within the available resources, ensuring to maintain high quality standards, compliance with the law and effective problem solving. However customer's perspective of the operations might vary in different areas as the customers are not concerned about the operating costs, they generally look for minimized delays and queues and safety of visitors, high quality service and optimized visitor enjoyment regardless of costs, complaints should be dealt in a positive manner without any time delay. Many skills and attributes are required for effective operations management within a site like good knowledge of the site its staff and its usage by the visitors, paying attention in detail about the site, planning systems, procedures in advance and flexibility to change them in different circumstances, effective crises management, financial management, being firm but tactical, confidence on own abilities and judgement, seeing things from customers and staff perspective and looking for constant improvement. Operations management within an attraction site is to enhance the quality of visitor's experience. Generally the areas which have a great impact might include the way the queues are managed, handling complaints in an effective and efficient way, solving problems quickly, steps to increase visitor's enjoyment and their safety to make them feel positive to visit the site. There are constraints on operations management with in an attraction site which depends on:

Operation manager attitude, experience, abilities.

The attractions organisations structure, culture and beliefs.

Availability of resources like skills of the staff and their freedom in order to solve the problems.

Availability of financial resources.

Legislation, regulations and social acceptability (Swarbrooke, 2002).

Financial resources are funded by Glasgow City Council and are ahead of many national names like British Library and Tate Liverpool. The attractions include the opening of the Doctor with exhibition at the end of the month where Kelvingrove will be the centre of scientific universe. Bailie Liz Cameron, chairwoman of Culture and Sport Glasgow manages the museums and galleries said that " These (as stated above) figures prove once again that Glasgow's collections are of both national and international significance. We will continue to invest in our museums and art galleries, bringing new exhibitions to some of Scotland's most cherished attractions"(Cameron, Glasgow News).

The operations management should consider handling the operations such as minimize the risks associated with the display of art gallery and museum articles. They (Kelvingrove operations team) focus on the spending of visitors at various occasions. This is handled by museum by placing all the facilities and amenities which all aged people feel to spend money such as cafeteria, restaurant and some books related to history, some articles which can easily attract young generation which are stylish. They (operations team) not only

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considers these aspects of entertainment of making maximum profits from visitors but also the management should spend appropriately on labour, power sources etc. To handle the cost-in and cost-out schemes equally. They should also need to take care of providing special access to the disabled people or old people who are challenged but would like to visit the museum. All these activities are handled complying the laws and regulations in Scotland. The next aspect is about the Kelvingrove handles several minute things also in a big picture like: facility for car parking, toilets and elevators to be provided. And for the safety guidance, there are many fire exit points where the staff is trained to guide the visitors to the fire exit in case of fire. For addressing difficulties the visitors are facing or challenges they face during the visit or suggestions they would like management to keep an eye and improve better: All certain feedback can be submitted in a separate department for efficient handling of all the concerns. So, The operations management is either successful for Kevin grove as it follows and perfectly implements the functions namely problem-solving, resource management, risk management, visitor attractions, customer satisfaction and last but not the least: quality.

Quality perspective:

Generally in product related manufacturing industries quality is a product-led concept which concentrates on features and attributes of the product. The extent to which a product or service can satisfy wants and needs of a customer can be seen as a quality. According to Swarbrooke (2002) quality can be defined as “ the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs”. Quality is

not only about the outcome of the product or service but also the whole processes that involves getting the outcomes. Quality in visitor's attractions is all about offering a good service to the visitors. Quality at visitor attractions can be viewed in two ways as a set of outcomes visitors receive or the processes how the attraction operates. For example set of outcomes might include the physical appearance; the price the customer pays, service offered, safety, reliability and the number of complaints about the attractions. The processes include human resource management, hierarchy, culture style of management, and marketing style of the visitor attraction. When designing quality management systems there are three important questions that should be considered for attractions they are (i) definition of the quality the management will use (ii) performance standards and measurement system to be used (iii) the management systems they need to adopt for achieving quality. So attraction operators should pay attention to both process and outcomes in their quality management systems. The quality management system should include every aspect of management of attraction like tangible elements of the attraction which include buildings and structures, maintenance levels, comfort and security of visitors. Quality management within a visitor attraction can be viewed from both internal and external perspective. For example internal perspective includes the views of attraction managers for whom quality is smooth operation of attraction site and minimum customer complaints, attraction staff who sees quality as their terms and conditions of employment and few complaints to handle. The external perspective includes the views of customers who tend to see the quality in terms of how easy, safe and secure to use the site and the value for their money (Swarbrooke, 2002).

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Measuring Quality:

In order to maintain quality service it is important to measure quality. Among the techniques available for service quality measurement SERVQUAL method developed by Parasuraman et al. in 1985 is the most popular. It is a technique that can be used to perform a gap analysis between an organization's service quality performance and the customer's service quality needs. It is an empirically derived method that can be used by a service organization to improve its service quality. It takes into account the perceptions of the customers of the relative importance of service attributes. This allows an organization to prioritize and use its resources to improve the most critical service attributes. The methodology is based on 5 key dimensions:

Reliability: This is an ability to deliver the service accurately and as promised. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) it is the most important determinant.

Responsiveness: to provide prompt service and willingness to help customers.

Assurance: the trust and confidence customers will have on staff.

Empathy: it covers care and individualized attention to customers.

Tangibles: this includes physical facilities, equipment, machinery, personnel and infrastructure (Fitzsimmons, 1994).

Quality is subjective and has different meanings to customers and service providers. From the staff's point of view quality is measured by the number of complaints registered from the customers, the fewer the number the higher is the quality of the service. However for the customer it is the environment and experience of the place with respect to the money spent which defines quality. The aim of the management is always to minimize the gap between these two and hence in order to measure quality Servqual is an effective tool under such conditions. In the following section we will try to use the tool to measure quality of the Kelvingrove Art gallery and Museum using the personal experience of the author.

ASSESSMENT OF THE KELVINGROVE MUSEUM FOR QUALITY

The author paid a visit to the museum recently to have a firsthand experience of the museum and its facilities. During the course of the visit he interacted with visitors to get their feedback on their experiences. In most of the cases the feedback varied from good to excellent, a number of them were thrilled with the experience the museum offered after the restoration. They were happy that the things were better organized, displays were in order, lighting was improved and overall the museum had improved aesthetically. On the five dimensions of Servqual, museum performed as follows:

Reliability: After the restoration work, out of 20000 objects that were made for display, there were 50% of the objects being displayed with a number of nearly 8000 objects as promised. More back space has been provided to the public.

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Responsiveness: Staffs have been highly customer focussed and responsiveness level to customer discomfort has been very high. This is seen in the visitors rating who have rated Kelvingrove art gallery and museum as the best and rated 5 out of 5(Info and Reviews, Kelvingrove).

Assurance: The organisation is particular with the awareness of the social inclusion. I observed during the visit to Kelvingrove that there are many educational activities like: training, volunteers, providing knowledge to the children about the history. Moreover all the staffs are knowledgeable about the exhibits and were courteous in explaining them to the visitors. These are as discussed above suit the role of assurance in the SERVQUAL approach for the museums.

Empathy: Staffs are presentable and courteous and are always at the disposal of the customers.

Tangibles: All the facilities and art works are neatly maintained

From the above analysis, it is evident that Kelvingrove ranks high up in the list of places of attraction in Scotland. It is a cultural heritage and pride of Scotland.

Recommendations:

In spite of the fact the management of Kelvingrove is continuously trying to improve the service to the visitors there are still some areas where considerable improvement can be done. These are as follows:

1. Continuous training needs to be provided to staffs about the artefacts and exhibits at the museum so that they can provide the correct information when asked for by the visitors. A couple of times the author faced this issue during the visit
2. A few artefacts in the Italian Art Gallery do not have any description about them. Visitors may feel a sense of incompleteness when they don't get a descriptive narration of art works.
3. The day of visit of the author collided with a national holiday which drew a large number of visitors to the museum. However, to manage this large crowd customer assistance staffs were not sufficient. Management should look into this matter and probably fill this gap through part time staffs if not by full time to handle large crowds
4. Management should look into rationalizing the food price at the restaurant which appeared to be too costly.
5. Management should take adequate precaution and strictness when allowing children inside the museum as they were touching art work and might damage them.
6. Some of the artworks and other objects were hung in a manner which was "crowded and distracting", for instance, the Vuillard. Moreover every painting in the Impressionist room had a horrid flip chart attachment projecting from the wall.

7. Titian's Christ and The Adulteress and the Bellini Madonna could not be contemplated in silence because of the nearby narration concerning Botticelli's Annunciation

These recommendations should be addressed as soon as possible to wipe off any kind of blemishes on the otherwise extraordinary place of attraction in the heart of Glasgow.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The annual reports for the museum are very limited that are published in the website which are not sufficient to analyze the position of the museum in the current market.
2. Few of the managers were providing only certain amount of information and are not ready to give detailed information.