

Creating a new marketing strategy for gengis at the thistle hotel

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



1 An Overview of the Thistle Hotel, Middlesbrough

The Thistle Hotel is situated in the centre of Middlesbrough in the busy Teesside business area. It has a capacity of 132 bedrooms, including 12 premier executive rooms. There is also an Otium leisure complex, meeting and function rooms, a cafe bar named Comotion and a restaurant named Gengis. For the purpose of this project, the main focus will be the restaurant, Gengis, and how to market it to non-residents of the hotel.

1. 1 Gengis

As previously mentioned, Gengis is the hotel's restaurant and is connected to the cafe bar. It is able to seat seventy-six people comfortably however for parties, the bar area is used and can cater for one hundred and eighty people. The opening hours are 12pm till 2pm, Monday to Friday and on Saturdays and Sundays if there is a Middlesbrough match playing. In the evening it is open at 6. 30pm and service is stopped at 9. 30, Monday to Sunday.

The hotel was rebuilt in 2000 after an £8. 5 million investment therefore the restaurant has quite a modern atmosphere and the decor is up-to-date. Gengis prides itself on offering an interesting and exotic culinary experience. A sample of the evening, lunch and dessert menus is shown in appendix 1.

What follows is the mission statement, vision and values of the hotel to help with the understanding of the company.

Mission Statement

To be a professional, friendly team, consistently offering four-star standards of service, comfort, food and hospitality. To anticipate guests needs and exceed their expectations.

Vision

We will build Britain's leading full service hotel brand, operating profitably under a widely recognised and trusted brand.

Values

- * We will always be thoughtful about the needs of our internal and external customers and be thorough in satisfying them
- * We will consistently look for ways to improve our offering
- * We will create an able, open and transparent culture
- * We will be friendly, positive and energetic employees

2 SWOT Analysis

In order to understand the critical issues that can be used to push the marketing plan forward, a SWOT analysis was conducted. This is the most common mechanism for structuring information to provide a critical analysis.

2. 1 Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths and weaknesses tend to focus on the present and past and on internally controlled factors.

Strengths

- * Gengis has a major advantage in that it is located in a four-star hotel. They can use this to portray an image of quality to non-residents who would not necessarily be aware of the hotel's facilities.
- * The hotel itself is in a prime location to attract customers from nearby businesses. This is perhaps another market that could be exploited by attracting passing lunchtime trade.
- * The restaurant has a good staff base that have all been trained in hospitality and so have excellent customer relations.
- * The Thistle company has a website showing all of their hotels around the country and the link to Middlesbrough's hotel makes a statement, if short, on the quality of the restaurant.

Weaknesses

- * The restaurant is situated inside the hotel on the first floor with no indication of its existence outside the hotel. This means that passers-by would not be aware that restaurant facilities were available at the hotel unless they went inside and asked.
- * There is no current marketing strategy in place for the restaurant. They are simply relying on word of mouth, which is not enough to attract non-resident customers.

- * The focus of any marketing that does exist is the hotel as a whole with no specifics.
- * Meal prices are quite high, with one course being £12.95, two courses £14.95 and dessert £3.50 on a lunchtime and in an evening, one course being £16.50, two courses £19.50 and three courses £22.75. This may put off potential customers who do not want to pay so much.
- * The meals offered are quite heavy, including at lunchtime, which may put off customers who just want a light snack.

2. 2 Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities and threats tend to focus more on the present and the future. They give a more outward looking, strategic view of likely developments and options the company faces.

Opportunities

- * The restaurant has a good opportunity to take advantage of the business market. Particularly from the surrounding businesses as no other restaurant appears to do this.
- * They could overcome some of their competition by putting out advertisements and promotions. This will help increase the non-resident markets knowledge of Gengis's existence.

- * The management of the restaurant has the opportunity to take examples from their competitors marketing strategy and use them to their own advantage. Obviously using only the strategies that work.
- * They need to take advantage of their four-star reputation more effectively.

Threats

- * Competition is the biggest threat to Gengis as there are many different restaurants in and around Middlesbrough.
- * All of the other restaurants in Middlesbrough have regular advertising strategies and promotions available. This is a threat as Gengis has no form of advertising at this point.
- * As prices are high in Gengis, the competition may have a price advantage. However customers in this market appear to be more concerned the quality they are receiving than the price, as demonstrated later in the results from the market research conducted.
- * Due to the demographics of the Middlesbrough area, it suggests that the population do not have a large amount of disposable income and so will not eat out very often. This however is a factor beyond the hotel's control.
- * It is just after Christmas so in general, people will begin saving again unless they are given a good incentive to spend. This is why Gengis urgently needs to establish awareness and offer promotions.

3 Competition

6 different restaurants have been chosen in order to assess the marketing strategies used by the Thistles competition in and around the Middlesbrough area. These are:

- * Central Park
- * The Purple Onion
- * Joe Rigatoni's
- * Fellinis
- * The Stainton
- * Isaac Wilson

Each restaurant has been looked at to see what marketing strategy if any is being used, to judge how strong competition in the restaurant area of Middlesbrough could be and to possibly use competitors marketing strategies in a plan to market the thistles own restaurant facilities. The following is a look at these restaurants and the different offers etc that they offer.

3. 1 Central Park

Opening times 12noon-11. 30pm

There are no special offers at all from Central Park. Some set menus and meal deals are available. It was enquired as to whether this was just because of the Christmas season and we were informed that this was the case and

they do have strategies in place to offer certain deals throughout the rest of the year, such as two for one deals etc. There are no discounts for group bookings.

3. 2 Purple Onion

Opening times 11am-10pm

There are no special offers on food and only a few drinks promotions. Set menus were Christmas orientated. No promotional offers available at present, but they do occasionally have meal deal offers. There are no discounts for group bookings. The purple onion uses flyers and advertisements around Middlesbrough for promotion. They also have live band night and so are able to mix the bar and restaurant atmosphere well. This was one of two restaurants with its own website.

3. 3 Joe Rigatonis

Opening times vary, usually open to around 11.

Up until the 11th of December, Joe Rigatonis has a happy hour, with cheaper food and drink prices. It is ceasing this on the 11th for Christmas but is likely to be back again after New Year. Promotion involves everything from flyers to radio advertising. There are no group discounts but there are regularly offers on the meals, particularly for students who receive money off vouchers at the beginning of the new university year.

3. 4 Fellinis

Opening times 11am-11pm (closed 2-5 in the afternoon)

On weeknights Fellinis has a happy hour from 4-6 with cheaper meals on offer. They also offer a group discount if booked on a Thursday. They occasionally use radio advertised when offering specific deals.

3. 5 The Isaac Wilson (a JD Wetherspoons pub)

Serves meals up until around 10 according to demand.

This is the pub/restaurant with the most meal and drink deals that change fairly regularly. Curry clubs, free drinks with certain meals and three meals for the price of two. There are also posters all around the pub advertising JD Wetherspoons and new offers that are soon to start. They accept group bookings but give no discounts.

3. 6 The Stainton

Food available until 10

A pub outside of Middlesbrough highly rated by locals. They hold culinary theme nights where they serve only one sort of food, such as Italian and Indian nights. House specials are offered at a cheaper price all year round. There is little obvious promotion for the pub other than a blackboard. However they have their own website and also rely on word of mouth.

3. 7 Conclusion

Compared to Gengis, all of the above restaurants have an effective advertising strategy. Middlesbrough is perhaps not best known for its culinary delights and so leaves restaurants needing to raise the public awareness of the fact they exist. The most common offer appears to be the deals offering two meals for the price of one and such like. It may be a good idea for Gengis to offer a similar deal in order to compete on the same level, as they cannot rely on their reputation alone.

The most obvious advantage that all these restaurants have over Gengis is that they are known. The Thistle hotel needs to spend time raising awareness of their restaurant in order to utilise this asset more effectively.

4 Market Research

As it became evident from the initial investigations that Gengis had no marketing strategy in place, research was needed to look into just how many people knew that the restaurant existed. Then, in order to formulate ways in which the restaurant could attract more customers, information was gathered on the factors affecting the potential customers choice of restaurant.

Each member of the group took ten questionnaires into Middlesbrough town centre to give us a random sample of fifty people. The results were then collated and are shown as graphs below.