

Original Research Article

The impact of e-marketing and services: to achieving effective customer's service in the hospitality industry in Nigeria

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Abstract

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The impact of electronic marketing (e-marketing) and services to achieving effective customer's service in the hospitality industry in Nigeria is the global issues in the hospitality sector, and the fastest means of service in the industry. The effects of electronic marketing in the customer service, makes the business of the operators of the industry easy and coordinated. In this era the use of electronic media has or is playing role; in the development or improving the marketing and the relationship of customer's (guest) with their prospective hotels. It exposes the activities of the industry and improves satisfaction, customers' loyalty and retention. The researchers adopted the survey method. The instrument used was the questionnaire arranged and analyzed in the likert method with simple percentage. 120 were sampled from tourist online and guests and staff from three hotels located in Abuja Nigeria. The study revealed that e-marketing and service has a great influence to satisfying customers of the hospitality industry; and improves the socio-economic importance of the industry. The study also concluded that the hotel operators, managers and investors should tap into the trend or the global network system of marketing to improve the business relationship with the world.

Key words: Benefit of e-marketing, between e-marketing and customers services and e-marketing and hotel industry, e-marketing, relationship

INTRODUCTION

According to the definition provided by the American Marketing Association (2008), marketing refers to "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders." In essence, marketing is a consumer-oriented philosophy or way of doing business; companies that are consumer-oriented will put consumers' needs and wants on their top priority. From this perspective, the ultimate goal of marketing is therefore to create and retain profitable customers by satisfying their demands. It is worth noting that the goal of retaining profitable customers is particularly challenging in Asia including Hong Kong. This

is because people in this region tend to be more group-oriented and the word-of-mouth effects are especially strong.

Hospitality marketing is unique because it deals with the tangible product, like a bed in the hotel or food in the restaurant, but it also deals with the intangible aspects of the hospitality and tourism industry. It is about the experience in a trip and social status it brings eating in a fine-dining restaurant. Hospitality marketing is very critical in the success of any hospitality and tourism product, organization and tourist destination. Proper marketing effort promotes a product or service that fills the needs and wants of the consumers and at the same time, bring profits to the organization or country that features it.

What is e-Marketing?

E-Marketing or electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the Internet. The terms e-Marketing, Internet marketing and online marketing, are frequently interchanged, and can often be considered synonymous. E-Marketing is the process of marketing a brand using the Internet. It includes both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and uses a range of technologies to help connect businesses to their customers. By such a definition, e-Marketing encompasses all the activities a business conducts via the worldwide web with the aim of attracting new business, retaining current business and developing its brand identity. E-marketing refers to the use of the Internet and digital media capabilities to help sell your products or services. These digital technologies are a valuable addition to traditional marketing approaches regardless of the size and type of your business. E-marketing is also referred to as Internet marketing (i-marketing), online marketing or web-marketing. As with conventional marketing, e-marketing is creating a strategy that helps businesses deliver the right messages and product/services to the right audience. It consists of all activities and processes with the purpose of finding, attracting, winning and retaining customers. What has changed is its wider scope and options compared to conventional marketing methods. E-marketing is deemed to be broad in scope, because it not only refers to marketing and promotions over the Internet, but also includes marketing done via e-mail and wireless media. E-marketing also embraces the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management (ECRM) and several other business management functions. E-marketing joins creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including: design, development, advertising and sales. It includes the use of a website in combination with online promotional techniques such as search engine marketing (SEM), social medial marketing, interactive online ads, online directories, e-mail marketing, affiliate marketing, viral marketing and so on. The digital technologies used as delivery and communication mediums within the scope of e-marketing include:

- Internet media such as websites, youtube and e-mail
- Digital media such as wireless, mobile, cable and satellite.

Benefits of E-marketing and services to customer services

In today's internet age, building an online presence is imperative for all businesses to be competitive. E-marketing provides businesses with access to mass markets at an affordable price and allows them to

undertake a personalized marketing approach. The flexible and cost-effective nature of e-marketing makes it particularly suitable for small businesses.

Following are some of the benefits of e-marketing for small businesses:

- Wider prospect reach – the internet has become part of everyone's life. So for whatever products you offer, there is already an existing market on the World Wide Web. With e-marketing, it allows you to find new markets and potentially compete worldwide with only a small investment.
- Cost-effective approach – A properly planned and effectively targeted e-marketing campaign can help your business reach target customers at a much lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods.
- Reduction in costs through automation and use of electronic media – e-marketing presents a strong business case in cost savings, particularly in the areas of transactional costs, customer service, digital media channels, print and distribution.
- 24/7 marketing - with a website your customers can find out about your products and make purchases even if your physical (bricks & mortar) premises are closed or you don't have physical premises at all.
- Personalized one-on-one marketing - e-marketing allows you to reach people who want to know about your products and services instantly. For example, many people take mobile phones and PDAs wherever they go. By combining this with personalized e-marketing, you can create very influential and targeted campaigns.
- Increased interactivity – e-marketing allows you to create interactive campaigns using music, graphics and videos. Through two-way communications, interactive games or quizzes, you can engage your audience and give them greater involvement and control over their web experience.
- Increased ability to track results – e-marketing makes it easier to measure how effective your campaigns are. It allows you to obtain detailed information about customers' responses to your advertising, through the use of methods such as pay per click or pay per action, etc.

However, before you get started with your e-marketing, it is very important to have some skills and know-how in order to run an e-campaign effectively. If not, you run the risk of wasting your valuable resources with a poor campaign.

Objectives of E-marketing

E-marketing objectives define what you want to achieve through your e-marketing campaign. They set the reasons why your business wants to go online and allow you to estimate and monitor the progress of your online marketing activities. They also provide an incentive to focus on critical areas and formulate strategies to help

achieve intended objectives.

Different businesses may develop different e-marketing objectives depending on their individual circumstances.

A useful framework for developing effective e-marketing objectives is the five S's framework, which includes:

- Sell – using the internet to sell products and services
- Serve – using the internet to serve customers
- Speak – using the internet to communicate with customers (both existing and potential)
- Save – using the internet to save/ reduce cost
- Sizzle – using the internet to build brand identity

When setting your e-marketing objectives, you need to make sure that they are:

- Specific – specify what is to be achieved
- Measureable – expressed in measurable terms such as key performance indicators, outcomes, numbers, percentage, dollars, etc.
- Action-oriented – state which actions need to be taken and who will take them
- Realistic – achievable with the resources available
- Time Specific – establish specified time frames.

Examples of some typical e-marketing objectives could be:

- To achieve 20% online sales within the first year of launching online marketing campaigns.
- To increase online sales for all products by 15% in 2011.
- To grow email coverage to 50% of the current customer base by the end of next year.
- To reduce the annual cost of direct marketing by 20% through e-mail marketing.
- To improve brand awareness, brand favorability and purchase intent by surveying 300 online customers each month.

The relationship between e-marketing and hospitality industry

E-marketing is also known as Internet marketing, web marketing, online marketing or digital marketing. It is growing at a dramatic pace in the hospitality industry and is significantly impacting the business behaviors since it drives more revenue than traditional marketing. A successful e-marketing strategy should comprise a set of specific e-actions that help hoteliers reach their planned objectives. These e-actions can be grouped into the following five main sections (A to E):

A/ Search Engine Marketing (SEM): The large majority of Internet surfers use search engines to find information about hotels or travel destinations online. This makes search engines one of the most effective tools in driving targeted traffic to a hotel's or destination's website. In the hospitality sector, hoteliers have two options with regard to SEM: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or sponsored search:

A-1/Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO attempt to improve a website's organic (i.e. non-sponsored) search ranking in Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) by increasing the content's relevance to search terms. Several techniques are recommended with regard to SEO:

- The Conversion Optimizer: This technique helps to assess, through several testing methods, how to increase the website's conversion rate. That is, the probability that a website visit leads to an effective booking.
- Optimization of HTML elements: HTML elements, apart from keywords and site design, play a major role in SEO since they are the cornerstone upon which all websites are built. HTML elements comprise title, Meta description, Header tags, image name, Alt tags; internal linking, etc.
- Content optimization for Search Engine: While the website's content should match the guests' search criteria, many hoteliers fail in making their websites a dumping ground for content to end up with websites that generate very poor value to guests and very low business opportunities. The process of content optimization for search engine starts with the identification of "Long neck" and "Long tail" keywords: Long neck keywords are the website's theme-related keywords which are heavily searched by the target guests by opposition to the Long tail ones. Examples of Long neck keywords might include, for instance, "find a price", "book a room", "hotel location" while examples of long tail keywords might include terms like "get warranty info", "get e-newsletter", "find a job", etc. Content optimization for search engine is all about distinguishing between "Killer content" (the core of visitors' needs) that should be clearly showcased on a website since it responds to "long neck" keywords, and "Filler content" that should occupy less space since it responds to "long tail" keywords. The final aim is to make sure that guests won't get lost on the website and that they will quickly find what they came for in as less button-clicks as possible.

A-2/Sponsored search

Sponsored search corresponds to search ads that allow a hotel /chain to be included in the sponsored results of a search for selected keywords. This action is generally undertaken through a bidding process on keywords. The Search Engines provide the mechanism for the sponsored search process to occur. This process is continually evolving and gaining complexity year on year.

The payment methods for sponsored search include the Cost Per Mille (CPM), the Cost Per Click method (CPC), Pay Per Performance (PPP) (also called "Cost Per Action" or "Cost Per Acquisition" (CPA)) and fixed costs (i.e. fixed-cost compensation).

B/Social Media marketing

Social Media websites such as Face book, Twitter, YouTube,... possess the advantage that they can spread any information or update posted rapidly to a very wide audience. Furthermore, sharable videos (i.e. choosing an engaging storyline and telling it with compelling visuals) constitute an amazing tool that keeps users' attention and subtly persuade them along the way words can't. Moreover, the implementation of Web 2.0 services has significantly contributed in transforming hotels'/hôtels' websites into social platforms to feature user-generated content. This enables guests to share their stories, photos and experiences which instantly foster word of mouth. Several international hotel chains have very efficient marketing implementation of social media. Starwood, for instance, introduced a new quantitative tool called "Reputation Management Index" (RMI) which, through review analysis from all social media, provides a lot of valuable data that can be used not only for service improvements but also for competitive insights. Besides, Starwood implemented efficient Review Management Responses to foster instant reviews any time.

C/ Mobile advertising

Mobile advertising is growing rapidly since mobile devices have multiplied, connectivity speeds have improved and screen resolutions have advanced. For these reasons, the online experience should be seamless across devices. An efficient action plan for a successful mobile advertising should include the following actions:

- Interface design: Adjustment of the web content for screen size so that users can comfortably access content in an intuitive way on a smaller screen and benefit from all functionalities on a mobile device (hotel search, access to reviews, bookings, payments, etc.).
- Study of people's behavior: This aims at the examination of "when", "where" and "why" people use Smart phones and tablets to better understand their booking trend, needs and expectations.
- Deals with Google: To generate fast growing Google search traffic to the hotel website from mobile.
- QR codes' use implementation: QR codes (i.e. Quick Response codes) represent a tremendous tool at the disposal of hoteliers to use for marketing purposes and also for customer service improvement. By displaying QR codes at the concierge desk, in elevators or at the back of a room card, hoteliers are offering their in-house guests the possibility to get automatically diverted, upon scanning these codes via their mobile devices, to a limitless supply of digital content (e.g. benefit from special offers, get valuable recommendations on the city attractions and night life, etc.). Another interesting use of QR codes might include the creation of a mobile review page to be linked to a QR code on the hotel bill so that

guests get encouraged to write their reviews while their memories are still fresh. This certainly improves reviews' accuracy and consequently customer service.

D/ Email advertising

Email advertising, also known as email marketing, is considered as a powerful e-marketing tool for hoteliers since it creates direct revenue opportunities for past, present and future guests. However, as emails and/or e-newsletters might be unsolicited, senders should either offer recipients an opt-out option or get their prior consent (opt-in). In fact, experience shows that permission-based email marketing is one of the most cost-effective and efficient marketing tools available.

The benefits of email marketing can be summarized as follows:

- Serves both as direct-response vehicle and branding tool.
- Creates personalized interactive relationships.
- Targets and entices recipients with relevant promotions.
- Plants seed in the mind of recipients regarding future travel.
- Serves as a tool to move distressed inventory.
- Functions as a sales force since it reaches thousands in seconds.
- Recruits new customers and retain old ones.

E/ Display advertising

Display advertising conveys its advertising message visually using text, logos, animations, videos, photographs or other graphics.

The most common two display advertising techniques are the following:

- Web banner advertising (or banner ads): They are typically graphic ads displayed within a web page. They use rich media to incorporate video, audio, animations or other interactive elements. These include Frame ad, Pop-ups/pop-under, floating ad, Expanding ad, Trick banners, etc.
- Text ads: A text ad displays text-based hyperlinks. Text-based ads may display separately from the web page's primary content or they can be embedded by hyper linking individual words or phrases to a hotel's website.

The online marketing is doubtless one of nowadays most powerful advertising methods. All companies, and notably in the Tourism and Hospitality industry, are fiercely competing to lead and overwhelm the online space in order to shift market shares from competition, increase their online traffic and make more profits. In addition, International hotel chains are considerably reducing their offline marketing budgets year on year

for the benefit of the online ones.

However, it is always required for any company wishing to succeed its e-marketing strategy, to ensure that all of its online space is well managed and that it is entirely under control. Moreover, updates and innovations in the online world are a MUST to attract customers and keep their interest constantly stimulated.

Hotel Industry E-Marketing

E-marketing is the new trend of marketing extensively acquiring by hotel industry. The traditional marketing strategy of hotel industry now not performing very well; in place e-marketing is taking the driver's seat. The travel industry survives as one of the better performing sectors in e-commerce. With no fulfillment and no need for online payments, the hotel industry is well positioned to capture the full potential of ecommerce while avoiding many of its risks. "Currently, in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and South Korea, approximately 5% to 10% of all lodgings are booked through the Internet, with 2004 estimates approaching 20%. This would follow the U.S. trend where hotels are reporting that up to 30% of all lodging is booked through online channels. Despite the burst of the Internet bubble, the promise of the Internet for hoteliers is still real: Online distribution can reduce costs, attract affluent customers and lessen dependency on more traditional and expensive distribution channels."

Marketing performance

Nowadays the fact that a hotel firm survival depends on its capacity to ultimate service experience, create value, and value is defined by customers (Day, 1990), marketing makes a fundamental contribution to long-term hotel business success.

E-marketing process used to evaluate marketing performance and effectiveness in hotel industry. On the other hand, when looking to the marketing performance and success measure there are many measures. Recently, in an attempt to organize performance measures Kokkinaki and Ambler (1999) have summarized it and established six categories for marketing performance and success measures which are: Financial measures / Competitive market measures / Consumer behavior measures / Consumer intermediate measures / Direct customer measures / Innovativeness measures.

E-Marketing Performance Measures

Standardized measures for E-marketing performance are both needed and necessary. The discussion of most of

the researchers has centered on the following measures (beside the traditional marketing performance measures):

- Traffic
- Visit duration
- Conversion rate (visit to purchase)
- Catalogue size
- Sales value
- Number of transactions
- Number of users (as measured by the number of registered user accounts).

E-marketing performance measures. Namely

- Financial measures
- Competitive market measures
- Consumer behavior measures
- Consumer intermediate measures
- E-marketing measures, such as
- Conversion rate
- Traffic
- Visit duration
- Number of transactions
- Number of users

The World Wide Web (WWW), which is the main e-marketing element, launched and started at 1993." (Ref: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/hub/studentnews/e-Marketing.doc>; viewed on 30/03/08)

"Despite of the fast growth in e-marketing research in the last decade, it appears that only from the late 1980s researches on e-marketing and internet marketing begun to appear in the literature. Starting with the work of: Malone, Yates and Benjamin (1987 and 1989), crossing by the work of: White (1997), Samiee (1998), Wientzen (2000), Porter (2001), Siddiqui et al. (2003), Daniel et al. (2003), Smith and Rupp (2003), Smith (2004 a, b) and ending with the work of: Sheth and Sharma (2005), Sandeep and Singh (2005), De Kervenael et al (2006), Flavián and Guinalú (2006), Taylor and England (2006)."

The research studies investigated and covered a wide range of e-marketing areas, such as: internet-marketing / e-mail marketing / intranet marketing / SMS marketing / extranet marketing. On the other hand, it is noticed that the literature in Internet marketing covers five main areas, which are:

- Internet marketing (IM)
- Environment,
- IM functions,
- IM applications and
- IM research.

E- Marketing components

- Customers (Buyers): impulsive, patient, analytical
- Sellers
- Products

- Infrastructure
- Front end - The portion of an e-seller's business processes through which customers interact, including the seller's portal, electronic catalogues, a shopping cart, a search engine, and a payment gateway
- Back end - The activities that support online order-taking. It includes fulfillment, inventory management, purchasing from suppliers, payment processing, packaging, and delivery
- Intermediaries - A third party that operates between sellers and buyers
- Other business partners
- Support services

Online Pricing

Enzi (2003) also addresses the issue of the networks identified by Dale (2003) above, which she claims are driving down hotel profitability. Noting that hoteliers use these networks without a clear understanding of their effect, she claims that they encourage competition based solely on price and urges a rethink of such hidden discounting. Citing forthcoming research from the "Centre for Hospitality Research at Cornell", she shows how price has become largely transparent and that consumers now book rooms at one price, shop around for better prices and then cancel and rebook. Rather than yield higher total sales, discounting simply displaces customers from one distribution channel to another. Any increase in volume fails to offset the revenue lost from the discounting. Claiming that this is true for all industry segments, regardless of occupancy rates, Enz maintain that hoteliers need to be more selective about the rates they provide to third party sites to insure that they are actually generating incremental revenues. Pointing out that consumers frequently search multiple channels for the cheapest price, and expect cheaper prices online, O'Connor (2003) investigates if the behavior of chain hotel brands conforms to these expectations. Using historical data, he surveys rates across five B2C channels to establish whether pricing is consistent across channels; whether one channel is consistently cheaper; and whether the apparent pricing strategy is logical from both consumer and hotel perspectives. His findings show that hotel companies typically use multiple distribution channels, and offer multiple rates across each channel. No channel consistently offers the cheapest price, but the analysis reveals differences based on market segment. Consumers are more likely to find cheapest prices on direct channels (chain website and call centre) at the lower end of the market, and conversely through intermediaries at the upper end. In other words, luxury hotels appear to be offering their cheapest prices through channels with the highest cost of distribution. O'Connor concludes that hotel companies in general do a poor job

managing their distribution, and urges them to develop well thought-out pricing policies that would encourage consumers to book through brand websites. Anecdotal evidence would seem to suggest that operators have followed this advice, as evidenced by the recent widespread use of "Best Rate Guarantees" on many hotel websites. Latvian and Crofts (2003) focus on the potential use of online negotiation models in hospitality. While yield management varies prices relative to demand, the rate to individual customers is fixed; hotels set the price and potential guests accept their offer or stay elsewhere. In contrast, negotiation is normal with group sales (meetings, conventions, tour groups, and corporate travel accounts), and Litvin and Crofts explore the applicability of contemporary e-commerce negotiation models to group sales. They argue that the "Consumer to Computer" model, (buyers nominate a price, commit to the transaction and have their offer matched to potential suppliers) is inefficient. Only the highest bid is accepted, other potential customers are left unsatisfied and incremental revenue is lost as non-winning bids are foregone. "Online Requests for Proposal" (buyers detail their requirements, which are then forwarded to potential suppliers) help overcome these limitations, but generally only facilitate matching and have no influence over subsequent negotiations. Litvin and Crofts advocate an "Automated Business-to-Business Negotiation" model, whereby the facilitating company maintains a dynamic database of active purchase and sale intentions, which it cross-compares to seek potential transactions. Once detected, the negotiation process begins and the system attempts to bring buyers and sellers together by adding stated trade-offs as needed. As this takes place automatically, negotiation can occur simultaneously with multiple partners, increasing the likelihood of finding an appropriate deal. The authors argue that this approach is superior as it balances power differentials through matchmaking, and facilitates the entire process. Compiling a critical mass of potential buyer and seller transactions has limited the commercial success, so far, of this application.

Customer relationship management and e-marketing

"Piccoli and colleagues (2003) review the risks and benefits of customer relationship management (CRM). This philosophy of intimate customer familiarity can lower marketing expenditures and increase sales through closer relationships and increased satisfaction. For this to occur, the entire hotel chain must cooperate in the collection, management and dissemination of customer information – an expensive and complicated process. They highlight a potential data-ownership dilemma caused by the structure of the US lodging industry in which owners, management companies, and brands

cooperate in the operation of properties. It is inherently difficult for these three entities to share customer data. In addition to cooperating, they frequently compete with each other, which could limit successful CRM implementation. Piccoli et al argue that if these difficulties could be overcome, CRM would work best at the brand level, a claim supported by two case studies of brands with strong CRM programs – Wyndam International (Piccoli et al., 2003) and Harrah's Hotels and Casinos (Magnini et al., 2003). The latter also exemplifies how successful CRM relies upon data mining. This procedure applies artificial intelligence and sophisticated statistical techniques to customer data to perform five tasks: classification, clustering, deviation detection, associations and forecasting, and can be a valuable tool for hotels seeking to better understand and predict guest behavior (Magnini et al., 2003).”(Ref: web.biz.uwa.edu.au/staff/jmurphy/O'Connor_Murphy_ijh_m2004.pdf; viewed on 12/03/08) Two articles investigate the implementation of a CRM system. Based on qualitative and quantitative research with Italian hotel operators, Minghetti (2003) proposes a CRM system and complementary matrix for evaluating guest information, which serve as a convenient blueprint for implementing or evaluating the CRM process. Louvieris and Driver (2004) suggest how the developing XML web standard could enable the CRM process. Consumers increasingly use a variety of devices (for example cell phones, Interactive television and kiosks) to access the web, and need different types of interactions, information and procedures depending on the relationship stage. They show how the current one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be successful. However providing the required personalization to service each situation is difficult using current technology. They propose how the unique characteristics of XML, which uses content specific rather than stylistic tags, could help hotel companies implement the needed device specific and loyalty level personalization. Finally, three studies investigate a subset of customer relationship management, online customer service. These use similar methodologies to test Swiss hotels (Frey, Schegg, and Murphy, 2003), Tunisian hotels (Gherissi-Labben, Schegg, and Murphy, 2003), and luxury chain hotels (Schegg, Murphy, et al., 2003). Swiss hotels showed the highest e-mail response rates at 71% with Tunisian hotels at a 45% response rate performing worst. Most respondents, however, gave sloppy and inadequate replies, which suggest a lack of focus on online customer service. The authors argue that email communication is business communication and use diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995) as a theoretical base to investigate differences in response rates and response quality. There were no significant differences in response rates but larger, higher rated and affiliated hotels tended to provide better quality responses.

Some economic and human factors that affect hotel choice

1. Follow the money - Travel decisions are not just about hotels: airline costs, car rental costs and entertainment expenses also drive how companies make choices for approved hotels, in what cities.
2. Familiarity breeds return - The role of chain/brand hotel loyalty programs is a significant benefit to travelers. Companies of all sizes can exert influence over these programs – in some cases aggregating stay points for pooled corporate benefit, in other cases permitting travelers to retain points but only in approved locations/chains/brands.
3. Internal and External Roles - Hotel selection is influenced by relationships that are cultivated over time. Full time corporate traveler managers guide purchasing decisions. Others within an organization may also greatly influence hotel choices. Corporations may use mega agencies to provide soup-to-nuts purchasing management. Mega agencies may be limited to making recommendations only. Mega agencies may be used for their buying power in selected markets and not others. Here again the total travel buy can influence both corporation and agency behaviors.
4. Power is Local – Sometimes overlooked and taken for granted is the principle of local selling: look in your own backyard. This backyard can extend many hundreds of miles in less densely populated area, or it can literally be next door in major centers of commerce. Inbound demand to hotels can be driven by external business factors pushing business to an area. Demand is also driven by factors that pull the business into an area. Local companies who supply good and services to larger corporations up the food chain can create a gravitational force on their customers. Examples of these include product demonstration facilities, heavy equipment sales, science based firms, companies associated with the arts (film, dance, theatre, and music) as well as their suppliers like attorneys, consultants, government contractors and the like.
5. Influence - Hotel chains brands utilize non-resident sales forces (i.e., national sales) to influence relationships and create opportunities for their hotels.
6. Diversity - Multinational companies have additional challenges since very, very few exhibit homogenous practices in their hotel-purchasing regimen. Typically they segment into areas or regions of common practice. Which of course means uncommon practices across other areas/regions or divisions. Diversity becomes the standard. Hotels can advantage themselves by deploying sales efforts against the right people in the right areas. Again, finding out what is “right” is a function of local market awareness.

Table 1A. Shows the respondents reaction on e-marketing challenges to the customers of hospitality and tourism industry

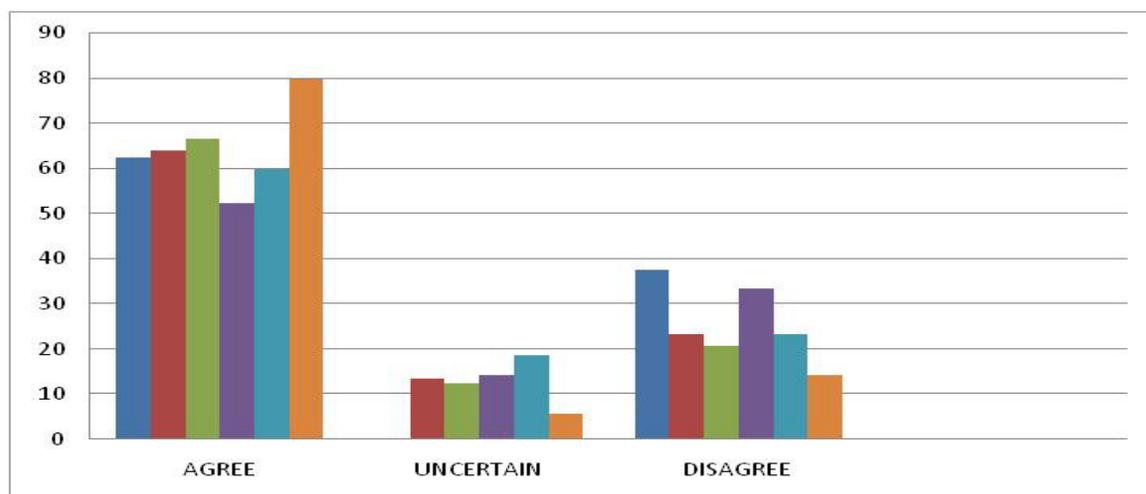
S/N	Question items	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1	e-marketing brings sharp decline on guest patronage	60 (50%)	40 (33.33%)	20 (16.67)
2	e-marketing cause unemployment	75 (62.5%)	30 (25%)	15 (12.5%)
3	It persuade foreign tourist from visiting tourist sites	80 (66.66%)	27 (22.5%)	13 (10.83%)
4	It affects sales and reduces profit in hospitality industry	15 (12.5%)	38 (31.67%)	67 (55.83%)
5	It tarnishes the image of the country as a tourist destination areas	20 (16.67%)	15 (12.5%)	85 (70.83%)
6	It has a negative psychological effect on the guest and customer	11 (9.167%)	10 (8.33%)	89 (74.167%)
7	It causes cancellation of tourist, trips, events, lodging and accommodation, business and program	66 (55%)	24 (20%)	30 (25%)
8	It instill fear and tension to the guests and staff	20 (16.67%)	33 (27.5%)	67 (55.83%)
9	e-marketing improves investments, growth and development	83 (69.167%)	17 (14.167%)	20 (16.67%)

Source: Field study, 2015 (Likert Scale)

Table 2. Respondent rating on the possible ways of controlling electronic marketing threats

S/N	Question items	Agreed	Uncertain	Disagreed
1	Mounting of web security monitor for web host	75 (62.5%)	0 (0%)	45 (37.5%)
2	Constant security upgrade of host page of hotels	77 (64.167%)	16 (13.38%)	28 (23.3%)
3	Manpower, technology and innovation training should be together to combat cyber terrorism in hospitality and tourism industry	80 (66.67%)	15 (12.5%)	25 (20.83%)
4	Regular training and retraining of staff on security is enhances cyber security protection systems in hotel	63 (52.5%)	17 (14.167%)	40 (33.33%)
5	Development and implementation of security policies with the hotel premises	72 (60%)	20 (18.69%)	28 (23.33%)
6	Storing and protecting hotel online vital information	96 (80%)	7 (5.83%)	17 (14.167%)

Source: Field Study, 2015

**Figure 1.** Respondent rating on the possible ways of controlling electronic marketing threats

METHODOLOGY

Research question

The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- (a) Does e-marketing bring challenges to customers' of the hospitality and tourism industry?
- (b) Are there possible ways of correcting the electronic threats?

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprised of 120 people, they are made up of guest and staff from three (3) know hotels in Abuja:- Sheraton hotels and towers, Transcorp Hilton, and Nicon Luxury Hotels, and online tourist. These were choosing using the simple random sampling method.

Development of research instrument

The researchers used a well structured likert questionnaire that dealt with the subject matter and also used oral and online interviews.

Validity of the instrument

A pilot study was done by the researchers a month preceding the period when the questionnaire was administered. In addition to this, oral and online interviews were used as well. The ideal was to know whether there is consistency in the results obtained and hence ascertain the reliability of the results obtained.

The researchers adopted the following categories in grouping the degree of agreement to the statements made by the respondents.

- 75 – 100%
- 50 – 74%
- 40 – 49%
- 0 – 39%

The researchers used simple percentage in working out the level of the respondents' agreement. Hence the first column was calculated thus:

$$\frac{\text{Frequency} \times 100}{\text{Sample size}}$$

Therefore, $\frac{60}{120} \times \frac{100}{1} = 50\%$,

$$\frac{60}{120} \times \frac{100}{1} = 50\%$$

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the finding majority 50% believes that e-marketing brings decline in the industry, 75% accepts

that it brings unemployment, 80% agrees it persuades tourist to visit, 66% accepts that e-marketing bring much cancellation in tourist visits, more so 83% agrees above all that e-marketing improves investment, growth and development in the hospitality and tourism industry. In controlling the threats 62% agreed for web security mentoring for host page, 64% accepts that security upgrade is necessary, 66.67% accepted that manpower, technology and innovation training should be together to combat cyber terrorism in the industry, 52.5% agreed that regular training and retraining of staff on security enhances cyber security protection system in hotels, 60% accepts the development and implementation of security policies with the hotel premises and 80% believes that storing and protection of hotels information online is vital and all will enhance and impact to customers of the industry.

RECOMMENDATION

The researchers therefore recommended that:

1. Hotel Companies of all sizes are challenged with generating high-quality E-marketing plans that showcase their product information to key target customers using varying resources. Nowadays many hotel companies should have the benefit of well-established procedures, advanced electronic equipment and sophisticated teams with a track record.
2. Additionally, e-Marketing should be encouraged since its impact and importance for hotels is really encouraging as using the Internet marketing as prime tool for marketing.
3. The impact of e-marketing is very positive when the hotel web site is managed by hotel itself.
4. Choosing which tasks to assign and, which ones to handle personally, is often the measure of successful management.
5. The Internet is intensely complex; it's not just what a site says that's important, it's how it says it that's important, too. Hoteliers should get it to work for themselves.
6. Hotel can save the cost of other variables if the reservation has been made from the website. The second mode of making reservation is through the travel agents, which is the conventional mode.
7. That e-marketing and service has a great influence to satisfying customers of the hospitality industry; and improves the socio-economic importance of the industry.

CONCLUSIONS

Compiling this review on e-marketing uses, impact and importance in hospitality industry has been for author a useful and enlightening exercise. On an individual basis,

the articles considered for inclusion make a contribution. The above literature is collected in a view to derive the importance and impact of e marketing in hotel industry. These e-marketing strategies are not only as an antecedent, but also as an outcome, of performance. Considering the rapid growth of e-commerce in our marketplace of hotel industry, there seems to be a need to assess what is really happening in the hotel world. So the literature review was mainly focused two sets of relationships: Performance--Marketing effects and E-Marketing-- Performance effects. The importance and uses of marketing has been discussed and that the hotel operators, managers and investors should tap into the trend or the global network system of marketing to improve the business relationship with the world.

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