

## Chapter 69

# Customer Relations Management Applications in the Tourism Industry

**Burcu Pekduyurucu Aydın**  
*Istanbul Aydın University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*In recent years, all information about customers can be shared with employees by customer relations management in tourism establishments, and accordingly, all customer expectations can be met. As a result, producing customer loyalty can be possible. Customer relations management applications in tourism establishments is crucial with regards to competing with other establishments. The most important factor for customers to be pleased with the tourism establishments and prefer the same establishment again is the qualities of front office employees who are directly in relation with customers because front office is the first department that customers interact with. Information about front office is provided and application circumstances of the front office are explained in this research. The population consists of managers of 4-star and 5-star hotels operating in Turkey. In this research, contributions of the front office employees in providing customer loyalty, preventing customer complaints, and customer relations applications of the establishment are examined.*

### INTRODUCTION

The first impression of customers on their arrival at the hotel will be effective on their satisfaction during their staying period at the hotel. Hence, the front office employees should have the capacity of taking such responsibility. Qualities of the front office employees are effective on customer loyalty. Because providing maximum level of com-

munication between the front office employee and the customer maximizes the customer satisfaction (Şener, 2001).

Customer relations management concept which is being used commonly also in our country in recent years, generating customer database by gathering as most detailed information as possible about customers provides operating in goods or service producing according to criteria

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that obtained by grouping customers. Because customers prefer firms which offer them value, make difference and firms which can standardize these abilities institutionally (Altıntaş, 2006).

## **THE FRONT OFFICE DEPARTMENT IN TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS**

The front office in hotel managements is a department which customers have relations before they come to hotel at the booking stage and is a department which plays an important role in getting the service they expected.

The front office is not only a department that sells rooms. It is a department where guests get some rest; get some food and beverages; mention all kinds of problems and satisfactions (Akgöz, 2003). The front office desk is a place where employees keep the track of the key exchange between the hotel and the customer, information demands of the customer and the customer accounts. At this place where check-in and check-out operations are held, solutions are searched for customers' problems at the same time. The front office is a point which provides all coordination between all customer services including management department in hotel organization. The front office as the focal point and as the heart of the hotel management is cognizant of everything going on at each stage of organization structure. The front office manager who is responsible for the front office department checks works of the front office employees (Zengin, 2001). Therefore the front office department that provides communication line between guests and hotel management is crucial in hotel managements.

The front office department that is center of activities in hotel managements can work effectively and efficiently only with employees who love their job and work, who are well educated in their job, who are capable of providing service and who have superior features in terms of outlook and behavior (Kozak, 1998).

## **CUSTOMER RELATIONS MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS**

Customer Relationship Management, is a strategic approach that enables organizations to use internal resources (i.e. technology, people and process) to manage the relationship with customers for the whole of their lives cycles, in order to create a competitive advantage and improve an organization's performance (Mohammed and Rashid, 2012). Establishments will have the opportunity to offer customer specific products and to response customers demands more easily and more quickly by the virtue of acting in the manner of customer oriented (Hamşioğlu, 2002). Customer orientation consists of acting through the customer and satisfying all needs/demands of the customer by the help of this (Gürdal, 2009).

In tourism establishments, applications are performed with the purpose of customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a results of satisfied customer's recommending the service they were given to their friends and relatives, commercial and promotion costs decrease; as a result of being informed about customer's demands and needs, establishment offer better service and better quality products; placing importance to customers individually increases customer satisfaction; by way of databases customer addresses and shopping habits can be followed constantly and customer loss can be minimized and customer loyalty can be increased by efficient marketing. Applications are not systematic and planned under the name of customer relations management (Ünal, 2011).

Applications are performed such as making a discount to long term customers, designing special benefit providing membership programs and within this scope by forming award programs for frequent shopper customers, rewarding them by sending special invitations and presents within the year; offering tailor made goods and services by considering customer's personal demands and needs; determining customers that can return profit

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