Chapter 10
Building the Friendly Airline Brand:
Hospitable Cabin Crew for Digital Marketing Activities

Hayat Ayar Senturk
Yildiz Technical University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Hospitality, the hosting behavior that brings convivial and personalized services with the ultimate aim to provide psychological comfort to guests, is a growing success criterion for service firms in today's new, experience-based economy, and thus has received considerable scientific attention in the service industries literatures. In this stream of research, most of the researchers have examined airline hospitality by taking the view pre-flight, in-flight, post-flight tangible and intangible service quality factors in an integrative manner. However, recent researches have pointed out that the airline industry has evolved in a direction where the intangible factor, such as hospitality of the cabin crew, stands out rather than its concrete functions such as "transport." In the light of this argument, the purpose of this study is, by examining various cases, to theoretically reveal the airline hospitality as a new and fresh perspective that need to be emphasized in digital marketing activities to create widespread impact on customer experiences.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9783-4.ch010

Copyright © 2020, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

INTRODUCTION

Let's think about the moments that we were happy in a city, restaurant or hotel. Is it important that the service is presented correctly and fully, or is it important how we feel when the service is being offered? Some people do not like rainy weather. Why? Wet hair and clothes, muddy boots, cold, chills… But others like it very much! A cup of hot coffee, favourite book, fireplace and raindrops on window… Then we need to ask the question again! Is it important that the service is presented correctly and fully, or is it important how we feel when the service is being offered?

The global business environment is no longer regarded as a service economy but is called the "experience economy" by Pine and Gilmore (1999). The concept of experience economy asserts that businesses must organize unforgettable moments for their guests and that the experience itself has become the product. Lashley et al. (2005) presented a study on the unforgettable service experience, which revealed emotional aspects that were more powerful than the quality of concrete features in creating unforgettable experiences. The unforgettable service experience is the quality of the interaction between employees (host) and customers (guest), which significantly contributes to the development of emotional value. Guest satisfaction increases with the quality of the emotions rising from these experiences.

Since the economy is moving rapidly from the service economy to the economy of experience, the service organizations have focused on how they deliver their services to their guests rather than that they have delivered to their guests. For instance, airline companies build their competitiveness on "creating an unforgettable travel experience by providing an unparalleled comfort and convenience to their guests in all of their flight experiences". In this respect, in order to reinvent the consumer experiences and enhance interactions with customers, digital marketing has become vital for the airline industry. Digital marketing literature indicates that there are several digital marketing strategies adopted by airlines such as e-mail marketing (Experian, 2014; Ryan & Jones, 2009), social media marketing (Punel & Ermagun, 2018; Seo & Park, 2018), website marketing (Powell, 2011) etc. In particular, past studies have aimed to explore the impact of digital marketing tools on consumer perceptions and behaviours (e.g. Wang & Tang, 2003). While these studies contribute to the literature by identifying or investigating the effectiveness of digital marketing tools, how those tools influence the consumer experiences has generally not been investigated in airline industry context. Hereby, the authors suggest that airline hospitality as an intangible factor should be highlighted to increase the effectiveness of digital marketing tools.

Hospitality, the hosting behaviour that cares convivial and personalized services with the ultimate aim to provide psychological comfort to guests (Nameghi & Ariffin, 2013), is a growing success criterion for service firms in today's new, experience-

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/building-the-friendly-airline-brand/234578

Related Content

Recommendation System for Sightseeing Tours
Ricardo Claudino Valadasand Elizabeth Simão Carvalho (2020). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 34-54).*
www.irma-international.org/article/recommendation-system-for-sightseeing-tours/259006

Reason for and Reason Against the Eco-Tourist Behavioral Framing: A Study Based on Behavioral Reasoning Theory
Faiza Sultan, Muhammad Asim Nawazand Ahsan Zubair (2024). *Supporting Environmental Stability Through Ecotourism (pp. 158-176).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/reason-for-and-reason-against-the-eco-tourist-behavioral-framing/340013

Pattern Mining on How Organizational Tenure Affects the Psychological Capital of Employees Within the Hospitality and Tourism Industry: Linking Employees' Organizational Tenure With PsyCap
Donald Douglas Atsa'amand Ersin Kuset Bodur (2021). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 17-28).*
www.irma-international.org/article/pattern-mining-on-how-organizational-tenure-affects-the-psychological-capital-of-employees-within-the-hospitality-and-tourism-industry/269289

The Effect of Room Service, Comfort, and Reservation Process on The Performance Dimension Evaluation: The Case of Grand Mercure Hotel Gajah Mada Jakarta
Adilla Anggraeniand Meyliza Thorina (2017). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 42-52).*
www.irma-international.org/article/the-effect-of-room-service-comfort-and-reservation-process-on-the-performance-dimension-evaluation/189744

Virtual Dark Tourism: The Role of Sound Branding and Augmented Reality for Death Sites
Bintang Handayaniand Maximiliano E. Korstanje (2020). *Destination Management and Marketing: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice (pp. 183-203).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/virtual-dark-tourism/251044