

PILOT CAMPAIGN OF GENERATING A HIGH AWARENESS BRAND, THROUGH EVENT MARKETING

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Abstract

This paper is intended as a proposal to integrate Ramada brand on the hospitality market in the geographical area of Pitesti city. Hotel objective is well defined, namely providing an excellent environment for development of business events, for local business enterprises. Arges business tourism is the main factor that was subject to an investment decision making for this purpose.

This paper aims to go further and bring an increase of the communication area of the hotel and also to non-business customers. I believe that a strict communication to a certain market segment and building the entire system of services provided for a single category of clients can be an "Achilles heel" in an economy with a high degree of instability, both political and legislative. Therefore, developing a solid awareness brand at an early stage (the first 1-3 of operation) may be a viable option for a long-term economic development.

Keywords: brand awareness, event marketing, communication strategy

JEL Classification: M31 – Marketing; M37 – Advertising

Introduction

Because of the intangible nature of the products offered by the hotel industry in general, creating an awareness brand can not be achieved except when the potential customer comes into contact with the other components of the marketing mix existing in the field of services: distribution, price, promotion, personal process, climate. On the one hand, personal experience can generate sympathy and attraction towards a brand almost instantly, but a great care must be taken as regards the situations when a customer may also be unsatisfied. It is commonly known that a satisfied customer will bring the news to a number of people and certainly, the unsatisfied one will bring the news to more people. Identification of desires, even of those not expressed directly is essential in these cases, in terms of a highly competitive economic market, as the one in Pitesti.

Under the current circumstances, I believe that event marketing is the ideal tool to get in touch with customers and their expectations. Advantage of controlling the environment in which you present your range of products and services is an advantage that you can enjoy on long term by creating a habit, a reflex among customers, to recommend yourself as the ideal location for different business or non-business opportunities in each person's life.

Since the beginning, the focus is on the forecast management, anticipative in the field of tourism services and importance which tourism, by its nature, engages all the other fields of a country industry.

Brand awareness is a marketing concept that quantify levels and trends in the level of knowledge that a consumer possesses towards a certain product or service and the extent to which it is aware of its existence between other similar products.

As previously stated, they do not follow the change in already existing communication strategy, but on the contrary, integrating a wider, non business public, in

the long-term communication strategy. Event marketing is the key, in my opinion, in the attempt to identify, in a greater proportion, the customer needs. Meeting under the same roof between both the customers, legal entities and individuals, as consumers of services related to tourism, such as arts and culture is an asset that must be fully taken advantage of.

In the evolution of global economy at the beginning of this millennium, tourism plays an important role, both in international trade and in the national economy of the most world states. By its contribution to the achievement of world gross product and employment, tourism ranks among the most prominent elements of the world economy.

Due to the effective way of improving resources and beneficial effects on economic, social and cultural level, governments of many countries give due consideration to tourism when establishing development programs at the macroeconomic level. Implementation of a development program is based on a strategy, of whose quality depends the success of this action, which may result in an increased demand for domestic and international tourism.

As in other areas, strategy concept is integrated into the forecast management of tourism activity and between macroeconomic, national strategies and those of organizations and tourist resorts there is a close interdependence.

Importance of strategy in the forecast management. Current knowledge stage

Being a specific term in the military field ever since ancient Greece (in ancient Greek stratos = army and egos = leader), the modern meaning of term “strategy” is "the art of leading a war."

Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian language defines strategy as being “a part of the military art, which deals with the matters of preparation, planning and conducting war and military operations”.

Evolution of society has brought a number of ideas and political and military concepts that formed a coherent body of strategic principles. Fundamental principals of political and military strategy are found in the long-term development of the great contemporary organizations, companies or other types of organizations (foundations, religious organizations) combined with current technology elements and the current value system. The term “strategy” is currently used with different meanings, depending on the area in which it applies.

The use of this concept in economics, both at macroeconomic and microeconomic level, is reflected by the research of the management and marketing specialists. Peter Drucker was among the first ones who, in 1954, highlighting the importance of the strategy for companies, shows that it must answer two questions: "What does the business consist in?" and "What should the scope of company business be?"

The first thorough approach to this concept belonged to Alfred Chandler, in his work "Strategy and Structure", published in 1962, who defined strategy as being the “long-term determination of goals and objectives of an enterprise, taking the decision on allocation of resources necessary to achieve those objectives”.

Igor Ansoff defines strategy as a set of criteria comprising decisions guiding the behaviour of an economic operator.

Recognized as one of the greatest experts in management, Henry Mintzberg, based on examination of a number of 1495 papers devoted to strategy, identified ten managerial thought schools regarding strategy and presents five definitions of it:

- Strategy as a perception, which designates a predetermined course of action to resolve a situation;

- Strategy as a draft or a project that consists in a manoeuvre designed to ensure overtaking of a competitor or an opponent;
- Strategy as a model that establishes a structure of consistent behavioral actions;
- Strategy as a company positioning lying in means of identifying the site that the organization has in its environment, most commonly on the market;
- Strategy as a perspective involving not only establishing a position, but also a certain perception of reality which is reflected in its actions, regarding market, technology etc.

Michael Porter had major contributions to defining the strategy; he is considered the number one specialist in strategy in the current period, its acceptance on strategy concept, for which he uses the term of generic strategy, being that it consists in "specification of basic approach for obtaining competitive advantage pursued by the company, that provides the context of actions to be taken in each functional area".

Ovidiu Nicolescu, by strategy, designates: all long-term major objectives of the organization, the main achievement ways, along with allotted resources to obtain competitive advantage, according to the organization's mission.

Different ways of approaching and application of strategy into economy reflects the evolution of this concept. Thus, the strategy has emerged as a distinct field of management and refers to long-term objectives of an organization, the means by which it aims at achieving its objectives.

Economic development and changes made in business environments led to complex adaptive responses from companies, which resulted in the strategic management system, whose essential component is the strategy concept. Strategic management purpose is "to suit enterprise resources with environmental threats and opportunities, so as to achieve a long-term viability of it" and it is defined as "the process of analyzing the current and future situation, long-term formulation and adoption of business objectives, implementation and control of decisions focused on achieving these objectives under present and future environmental conditions".

Strategic management, as a projected leading form, is a modern management system, defined as a broad and complex process by which the company top management establishes, based on anticipation of the changes that will occur inside and outside it, its long-term evolution and performances to be achieved by it, will ensure rigorous formulation, proper implementation and continuous evaluation of the proposed strategy.

Campaign for promoting the concept "Dinner Theatre"

Dinner Theatre? A strange combination or a natural mix? Ramada is a brand of Cendant Corporation, one of the largest hotel franchisors in the world. The business started in the U.S.A. in 1920.

Today, Ramada chain means an international network of 977 hotels, of which several hundred hotels in America are owned by the corporation and for the rest, a franchise is granted.

Cendant Corporation's intention for the future is to expand Ramada brand in Europe, as well as in Romania, as evidenced by the construction of a new Ramada Hotel in Pitesti which is classified in the category of 4 stars.

Representing an opportunity in terms of job placement, Ramada Hotel creates 100 jobs and also a possible development of a new concept in the Arges landscape: theatre and dinner!

Ramada Restaurant is a traditional restaurant offering outstanding cuisine in a comfortable and stylish space, where uniqueness is the key word, having a number of seats ranging from 180 to 200.

It is aimed at public awareness on the opening of Ramada Hotel and promoting it through the new concept "Dinner Theatre".

I choose Monday evenings for special events, because they are considered the most "quiet".

The proposed campaign objectives are the following:

- To obtain a net profit of any promotional activity;
- Attracting businessmen of Arges county.

Target audience

The target audience consists of population aged 20-65 years, with average income, but with orientation and adaptability to the new, as well as county businessmen.

Strategy to be applied

The strategy is to organize a series of "unique" and memorable events, materialized in the form of a dinner, an innovative local experience. Dinners are able to attract at least 100 people in the restaurant on Mondays.

Communication campaign planning

The role of communication in promoting a new concept is of strategic importance, since the public will have the correct perception of the communication strategy adopted by the event PR.

Ramada Restaurant contacts Al. Davila Theatre to propose it a series of shows in a new location and in an innovative formula: Dinner and theatre at the same time!

Performances will take place starting on Monday, May 16, 2011, immediately after and practically accompanying the inauguration of Ramada Hotel on May 15, 2011.

Al. Davila Theatre was chosen because it is a well known theatre on the local market, whose shows are popular, arousing interest and raising public confidence.

The agreement will develop for three months, representing the probation period, in terms of evolution of the concept and how it is received by the target audience. There will be a clear temporal planning of promotional activity to maximize the presence of target audience. Price proposed for such an event is 80 lei / person and includes dinner and theatre ticket.

The theatre show opening the series of events will be: "**Up is the sky**," a show produced by **Luminita Borta**.

Duration of "Dinner Theatre" event on Monday evenings will be 2 hours.

Expecting that there will be 150 people dining, including customers that are accommodated in the hotel that time, it is estimated the coverage of costs with actors, staff and food, also generating profit as follows:

80 lei×150 persons = 12.000 lei, of which:

- 10 waiters (belonging to the restaurant)

- actors= 3000 lei/evening

- food and drink (natural or mineral water of 0,5 l) 40lei/ person, resulting the

following:

40 lei×150 person=6000 lei/evening.

It shall be implemented the concept of healthy food, as close to nature as possible, without preservatives or harmful additives and drink will be chosen from a predefined list.

The menu has 6 standard options in which are offered various combinations of: fish, chicken, beef with salads, various types of vegetables and garnishing.

I may choose a table d'hote menu that offering complete meals at a unique price.

Sometimes two or more complete meals are offered on the menu, each preparation having its own price. Some table d'hote menu offers customers a limited selection of products included in the chosen dish, for example, a consumer may choose between a soup and a salad, or a restaurant can offer a rather wide choice of desserts. But for most of them, a table d'hote menu meal is fixed by a menu designer and customers are offered only a few dishes. Sometimes, table d'hote menus are also called fixed price menus.

Client can also order separately from the specific products from the restaurant menu list, but they are paid differently than the original price included in the ticket.

It is expected to obtain a profit of: $12,000 - 3,000 - 6,000 = 3000$ lei.

The first evening will have an opening price of **40 lei / person**, taking into account a loss of 3,000 lei, but the following ones will cover such loss.

The actual promotional action consists of:

- Making posters to be displayed in the restaurant in order to draw attention of familiar customers, in universities, clubs, pubs, libraries, cultural centers;
- Editing flyers that will be distributed in crowded areas of the city, to people falling into the target age category;
- Calling businessmen from Arges county and inviting them to the opening evening, based upon availability;
- A press statement is made in the local newspapers, as well as in those with national circulation and local editions;
- Radio spot is broadcasted in prime time slots; at the meeting with mass-media, both representatives/spokesmen of Ramada Hotel, as well as representatives of Al. Davila Theatre shall attend;
- conducting a photo shoot on opening evening.

Printing flyer price:

- 15x11 cm format
- 115 gr. paper
- recto/verso color-printing
- contour cutting
- double-coated glossy paper.

Number of copies printed: 5000

Price/ piece 0,0426

Total price (eur) **213**

Posters

- A0 format
- 170g/mp paper
- front side colour-printing

Number of copies printed (no. of pieces) 50

Price (ron/piece)

Total

1 650 lei

(401 eur)

Make-up: price 2000 €

Media coverage

Media will be covered by the following:

- **radio: - Info Pro-Pitesti;**
- **Kiss FM Pitesti;**
- **Radio 21 Pitesti;**
- **Magic FM Pitesti;**
- **Radio Muntenia.**

Elaborated radio spot - communicate information (known voice + background + effects):

“Theatre play and dinner?”

“Yes, you’ve heard just right!”

-Within Ramada Restaurant Pitesti, located in Calea Bascovului, no. 1, every Monday, in a refined and elegant background, where uniqueness is the key word, you can relax, feeding both your soul with a play and your body with a healthy dinner.

“Do you want to escape from everyday life for a few hours?”

“Dinner and theatre play, at Ramada Restaurant!”

“The grand inauguration shall take place on the 16th of May”.

“Details and reservations on: 0248-65.15.99”.

Radio spot production price:

Commercial advertising production is € 500 and it is made by an independent producer.

Payment is made at the NBR exchange rate on the invoicing date. It includes VAT.

Broadcasting price:

Time Slot: Monday-Friday 09 - 14 14 - 18 18 - 21

Broadcasting price (EUR/30 sec. advertisement) **18€ 15€ 10 €**

Time slot: Saturday-Sunday 18 - 21 21 - 05

Broadcasting price (EUR/30 sec. advertisement) **8€ 6€**

Radio spot will run 9-10 times per day, for 3 months as follows:

_ **Monday-Friday** during the following time slots: 09-14; 14-18; 18-21, the advertising will be broadcasted 3 times per slot, reaching the price of: $(18 \times 3) + (15 \times 3) + (10 \times 3) = 129 \text{ €}$;

_ **Saturday-Sunday**, radio spot will be broadcasted 5 times during the selected slot, reaching the price of: $(8 \times 5) + (6 \times 5) = 70 \text{ €}$

Radio spot broadcasting final price: 129 € + 70 € = 199 €

Local press :- Curierul zilei;

- **Argeseanul;**

- **Jurnalul de Arges.**

• local television: Arges TV, Alpha TV

There will be no costs incurred with local press and television, because event promoting will be made by sending invitations to grand opening for the media, which will cover the future newspaper articles and interviews following the event.

The campaign aims to significantly overcome the aimed objectives, the following being expected:

- estimated number of clients (150) will be exceeded;
 - forming a waiting list of 20-30 people for each event;
- Promotional campaign final cost : 3.313 €

Proposals

Considering the originally proposed objectives and fulfilling them as planned, after passing those three months, activities may be diversified by introducing new elements, namely:

- variety theatre ;
- jazz music evenings
- conducting performances with young talents in the foreground;

Each of these activities is addressed to a target segment, with the main purpose of promoting the Hotel through the series of unique events.

As regards the concept "Theatre at Dinner", it may be introduced a system that aims at retaining the already existing customers. I propose introduction of the following:

_ **silver card** - for students with a 15% discount on total bill;

_ **professional card** - with a 10% discount on total bill;

_ **business card** - with a 5% discount on total bill;

The business entities will have two billing options:

- as individual, where only fiscal receipt is issued;
- as legal entity, where invoice is issued for accounting records.

Conclusions

As I stated from the beginning of the paper, I made a long-term strategic communication plan for Ramada Hotel Pitesti. Tools used are related to the field of event marketing and experimental marketing, which areas, according to my opinion are perfectly moulding on the service area, in a market lacking some luster, which could have been taken as a standard, as it is that in Arges County.

Event marketing, as in the definition is not intended for immediate sale of the product, but it is related to the customer's awareness on services and their quality. Bringing together both the target customers of this time, the business and non business ones, does not, in any way affect communication due to the rebound effect mentioned in this work, is communicated in a certain direction, and secondary target audience is occasionally touched by their awareness of the possibilities that the hotel can make available to them.

Experimental marketing is also used as much, the potential customer being able to come into contact with other components of the marketing mix specific for the service market, such as staff and ambience.

Managing according to forecasting principles is as important as arranging a tableware on a customer's table and any omission from the top management may result in loss of customers, in the favour of competition.

As already stated, I did not pursue the change of existing communication strategy, but on the contrary, integrating a wider, non business audience, into the long-term communication strategy. Event marketing and experimental marketing are the keys that can bring long-term stability on this market which, in my opinion, is just beginning.

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