

**STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING IN TOURISM BUSINESSES: A
STUDY ON FOUR- AND FIVE-STAR CHAIN HOTELS IN TURKEY**

ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is consolidating its position in the world's economy day by day. For many individuals and countries, this can be regarded as an exit from the economic crisis of today. As a developing country, Turkey has its own share in the tourism industry and has become one of the most preferred destinations among travelers. In today's world, the changing environmental conditions and uncertainties have encouraged businesses to make decision in a more strategic manner. Strategic planning, in essence, can be defined as an extensive and long-range plan that is based on the development and growing opportunities of business within the framework of resources, market opportunities and threats that comprise all businesses. Here, marketing planning is the sum of complementing activities in a logical order allowing to determine marketing objectives and making programmes active in order to meet such objectives. In this respect, strategic marketing planning is the integration of strategic planning and marketing planning functions together. In this study, strategic marketing planning understandings as well as the implementation degrees of strategic marketing planning among four and five-star chain hotels in four major cities in Turkey are analyzed and determined.

According to the results of survey conducted among top management of 49 four and five star hotels, hotel businesses implement strategic marketing planning at a high level (73.5%), which, nevertheless, needs to be improved by means of special training programs.. Besides this, our study has helped us to understood the following issues: the existence of a difference in preparing strategic marketing planning between four-star and five-star hotels, the relationship between determining the target market and the implementation of strategic

marketing planning, the relationship between the hotel capacity and the implementation of strategic marketing planning, and finally, the relationship between the analysis used in strategic marketing planning and the involvement of the employees in the process.

Key Words: Strategic Plan, Strategic Marketing Planning, Tourism Industry, Hotel Businesses, Turkish Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Today's tourism industry has become a complex, changing, and dynamic industry. Because of this, the businesses in tourism industry are equally required to be ready for crises and unexpected situations like any other business. Being ready for these unexpected situations is possible if firms have the ability to predict. Just like any business, the tourism industry is a need of justified plans to predict its future and strategies. Firms constantly feel the need to implement certain strategies in their management and planning, but marketing activities are the places where this need is felt the most.

The importance of long-term conformity between the goals of management, and the changing market opportunities arises when uncertainties appear. This process - providing long-term conformity - is referred to as 'strategic planning'. It is necessary for each and every function carried out within a firm to be based upon a strategic plan, which is generally made within the firm itself. If it is tackled from the point of keeping pace with the market opportunities in the long-term, strategic marketing planning enables strategists to determine market opportunities and put forward the inputs in order to take advantage of it.

The revenue obtained from the services industry, including tourism, is estimated to be two thirds of the entire global revenue (Malhotra et. al. 2005). However, the marketing discipline was generally focused on the marketing of goods alone until services marketing emerged in the 1970s (Gronroos 1978).

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, in 2008, there were 772 lodging plants with tourism investment certificates, and 2688 lodging plants with tourism management certificates (Lodging Plants Statistics in Turkey 2008). The types of lodging plants in this statistics are as follows: hotels, motels, holiday villages, thermal hotels, hostels, campings, mountain camps, and cottages, apart hotels, special certificate hotels, golf resorts, tourism compounds, boutique hotels, b-type holiday villages, chalets and cottages.

Strategic marketing planning has an important role for tourism businesses which should be prepared in case of crises and changing environments. Strategic plannings based on tourism businesses or tourism environments make crucial contributions to tourism which is one of the most important economic catalyzers of Turkey and as well as the world.

In this study, the issue of strategic marketing planning is examined covering a series of four- and five-star chain hotels in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya in order to determine their understanding of strategic marketing planning, along with their points of view and implementations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Strategic Planning and Strategic Marketing Planning

A strategic plan, which is an extensive and long-term programme focusing on the business as a whole, is determined based on the opportunities of improvement and development of that business within the framework of capital, market opportunities, and threats. In other words, strategic planning is a process that leads to a long-term balance between business objectives and opportunities and stable market opportunities (Mucuk 2001)

Firms can reach a strong competitive position by formulating strategies that can be implemented in the market. Furthermore, an effective strategic planning system should coordinate the strategic activities between strategic business units (SBUs) and their functions

and should draw a frame that enables generating added value in the business (Phillips and Moutinho 1998).

Strategic planning has emerged as a response to the recession periods that businesses face with major troubles and the obligation of generating facilities with the help of activities that drive the business in the best direction, rather than establishing these facilities on tactical regulations (Gilbert and Kapur 1990)

Kudla (1980) defined strategic planning as “a systematic process that determines the firm’s goals and objectives for three succeeding years, and develop strategies in order to direct the gain of funds and their usage for reaching these objectives”.

According to the scholars that support open systems in business, the survival of such business depends on its adaptation to volatile environments (Phillips and Moutinho 1998).

Strategic planning is the venture of testing the control of the business on its sovereignty area and reaching a united goal. Strategic planning is to determine the goals and objectives of the top management and the tools that will be used to reach these goals and objectives and the renovation process of this determination (Shaffer 1984).

According to Kotler (1984), strategic planning is the duty of designing the management in order to create a healthy one to survive, although some of its functions get hurt.

The implementation of strategic planning in tourism industry which is the main topic of this study has a crucial importance because this tourism industry is too volatile and, hence, requires strategic planning. In the same perspective, Gilbert and Kapur (1990) have stated that the strategic plan that will be implemented for tourism and lodging industry should be dynamic and open to alteration.

A dynamic strategic planning process is the systematic revision of the factors that affect the ranks of businesses in terms of trade. Since this planning process is dynamic, the

strategy formulation should be effective, and the sources of management should be concentrated on potential sales. It should be kept in mind that the planning process has always been sensitive to changing environments (Gilbert and Kapur 1990)

A strategic plan determines the necessary limitations of marketing plan, and serving as a guide. The success of a plan depends on being systematic as such a systematic plan appears as a combination of strategic, development and functional plans. In order to strengthen this combination, the foundation of the plan and the underlying approaches should be monitored (Jain 1981).

Marketing planning is “primarily”, the body of activities assembled rationally to determine marketing objectives and to allow for such activities to operate in order to fulfill those objectives. Having said so, it can be stated that the marketing plan is a frame that determines to where and to whom marketing resources should be allocated.

In fact, strategic marketing planning is the integration of strategic planning with the functions of marketing planning. As mentioned before, changing environments and the volatility of environments force businesses to plan their marketing activities more strategically.

Essentially, planning is made in four functional departments of any business. These are: administration, manufacturing, marketing, and finance. The leading plan among these four plans is the marketing plan. This, however, does not imply that other plans cannot be generated until the marketing plan has been established.. All plans start at the same time but the marketing plan should be delayed until all the other plans had been thoroughly shaped (Jain 1981).

At the time of recession, marketing plans rank first in order to deal with economic uncertainty. Besides composing a good coordination between activities and individuals

whose works are interrelated, a marketing plan creates a base for the followings (McDonald and Payne 1996:31):

- Developing a habit of predicting the market atmosphere (such as politics, economy, and social standings);
- Preparing the business to cope with possible changes in the market;
- Eliminating unreasonable reactions to unexpected situations;
- Improving the communication between managers and departments;
- Decreasing the chaos that emerges once there is a unclarity in the direction of the business;
- Encouraging the administrative units to think systematically;
- Arranging business capital more effectively against the market opportunities;
- Establishing a framework for the continuous revision of the operations; and
- Leading to high return on income.

Marketing planning plays an important role in strategic planning, which is formulated for the entire business. This undertaking results in many benefits: first of all, it constitutes a philosophy around which business strategies develop. It provides inputs related with the strategists' determination and decisions concerning the available market opportunities; and related with the benefits that business can get from these opportunities. Besides these, secondly, it can determine the strategies for various business units, enabling them to reach their goals (Mucuk 2001).

Strategic Marketing Planning in Tourism Businesses

There are very limited studies related with the strategic marketing planning in tourism and lodging industry. These limited studies are generally concentrated on strategy, strategic

planning, and the relationship between strategic planning and performance. The empirical studies related with this topic can be found in the literature.

Significant studies that constitute a base for additional research include the following; Schaffer and Spencer (1988), Tse and Olsen (1988), and West and Olsen (1988) are focused on the relationship between strategy and performance. Olsen (1991) has investigated the three components of strategy – formulating the strategy, content of strategy, and implementing the strategy- for the lodging industry. One of the earliest studies on strategic management in tourism industry belongs to Schwaninger and conducted in Switzerland in 1986. Chon and Olsen (1990) have proposed a strategic tourism management model and tried to explain its implementation for tourism businesses. Athiyaman, and Robertson (1995) also, state that the strategic planning process implemented by tourism businesses has the same scope as the one implemented by manufacturing businesses. Generally, there are insufficient studies conducted in the field of accommodation or tourism sector. Those that have been made on the strategic dimension of marketing planning in the lodging industry include; Lewis (1982), Witham (1985), Schaffer (1986), Gilbert and Kapur (1990) and, Buttle (1992). At the end of 20th century, various studies were conducted upon recognizing the importance of marketing planning. Ferrel and Hartline (2005) have emphasized on marketing strategy as a whole, yet they also explain the structure of strategic marketing plan and its implementation in services sector.

RESEARCH STUDY

The underlying question to be answered by this study circles around have hotel businesses can establish their strategic marketing plan in order to cope with the changing environment and conditions, as well as the ways and the means to have competitive advantage

over their competitors. The aim of this study is to determine the understanding as well as the implementation as a crucial step for the success of business in four- and five-star hotels.

In line with the main problem of the study, the hypotheses of this research:

H1: There are differences in the strategic marketing planning implemented in four- and five-star hotels.

H2: There is a connection between determining the target market and implementing strategic marketing planning in four- and five-star hotels.

H3: There is a connection between the presence of a marketing department in four- and five-star hotel and the preparation of strategic marketing planning.

Population, Sample, and Limitations

When this study was conducted in 2009, there were 620 four-star and 379 five-star hotels in Turkey. The subject of this study under investigation as to determining the understanding and implementation of strategic marketing planning for tourism businesses is limited to the directors of 65 four and five-star chain hotels in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya, - a restriction due to time and money factors. Surveys were sent to the subjects but only 49 of whom replied, despite several reminders. This way, 75% of the population could be reached.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive study in which the Scanning Model has been used. Efforts were made to determine the degree of implementation of strategic marketing plans by the hotel managers, if they do, their preparators, and the way such plans have been implemented. The survey technique comprised the data collection method; in the mean time the views of a number of specialists (market experts and academics) were collected and the literature was studied. Later survey questions were prepared based on such data together with the

information in the fields of tourism, marketing and statistics. A pilot survey was conducted of five hotel managers after which, necessary corrections were made on the survey questions by using the feedbacks.

The model of the study contains the evaluation of the understandings of marketing directors of four- and five-star hotels as to whether they are aware of strategic marketing planning, as well as how they implement this plan.

The survey consisted of two parts: In the first part, the questions were based on determining the socio-demographic qualifications of the directors who answering the survey. In the second part, there were questions related with hotel features, and whether they implement any strategic marketing planning. The Likert type scale-5, multiple-choice, sequencing, two-choice type questions were used, and 33 questions asked in total. Nine statements related with strategic marketing planning were answered by the hotel managers in Likert type scale as follows;

1- Totally disagree

2- Disagree

3- Partially agree

4- Agree

5-Totally agree

The surveys were carried out through face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations, and e-mail.

Results of Reliability Test

The reliability of the survey in this study was evaluated by the Cronbach's Alpha test to be 0.791. As generally accepted, the reliability coefficient can be evaluated as;

$0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ is quite reliable, and

$0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$ is highly reliable.

As such the coefficient of 0.791 obtained from the Cronbach's Alpha test proves to be quite reliable for this study.

FINDINGS

Most of the corresponding managers comprised sales and marketing managers as well as assistant managers (63.3%). 67.3% of the participants were female and 32.7% were male. Of all the managers, 77.6% has worked in that capacity for at least ten years. A small portion of the contributors (22.5%) has worked in the same position for eleven years.

55.1% of contributing hotels have 300 or lower bed capacities; 32.7% of them have a bed capacity between 301 and 500, and 12.1% of them have 501 and more. Thirteen of the hotels (26.5%) that contributing to the research are four-star hotels, and 36 of them (73.5%) are five-stars. There are both sales and marketing departments in most of the hotels (89.8%) that contribute. In small numbers of these hotels (4.1%), there are only sales departments, and sales and marketing activities are generated in another department in the hotel (6.1%).

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

According to Table 1 above, a great number of participants (91.8%) gave a positive respond to the question whether they implement a target market analysis, a very important element of marketing strategy in their hotels. In this case, one can say that one of the conditions for strategic marketing planning has been met in the hotels from where an affirmative respond has been obtained.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

One of the questions in the survey requires the participants to rank their criteria while selecting a target market. To analyze the answers to this question, they were summed cumulatively, important points were obtained, and then ranked in order to create the Table 2. According to this table, the participant hotels regarded these criteria in the following rank: the frequency in the service usage of the market, demographic features such as age, gender and occupation, life style, and, finally, the geographic features.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

As it can be seen from Table 3, 89.8% of the participating hotels stated that they have a marketing strategy. This high percentage may indicate that they may possess strategic marketing planning.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

36 of 49 participant hotels (73.5%) stated that they prepare strategic marketing plans, and 13 of them (26.5%) mentioned not having such a plan (Table 4).

In one of the questions, the managers of the corresponding hotels were asked to evaluate the statements related with strategic marketing planning, the results of whose evaluation is shown in Table 5 below.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

Based on this data, there was a high level of agreement with the statement regarding the use of internet for establishing a widespread marketing network ($\bar{X}=4.63$).

As to the statement “We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy”, there was also a significant degree of agreement ($\bar{X}=4.44$).

There is also a high level of agreement with the statement “Changes in the economic environment affect our marketing plan” ($\bar{X}=4.37$).

There is a high level of agreement to the statement “Awareness of strategic marketing makes our hotel ready for crises” ($\bar{X}=4.35$).

As to the statement “Sales and marketing is just the duty of sales and marketing department in our hotel”, the contributors demonstrated lower approvals ($\bar{X}=2,24$). This can be due to the possibility that, generally, in hotels and business firms, sales, marketing, and other activities are being run by a corresponding department – a practice that has to be avoided.

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

H1: There are differences in the strategic marketing planning that are implemented in four-and five-star hotels.

As shown in Table 6, there are statistically meaningful differences in terms of p value ($p < 0.05$) for some statements. These statements are shown below:

“Changes in the economic environment affect our marketing plan” ($p=0.041$); “We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy” ($p=0.044$); “We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network” ($p=0.004$); and “The awareness of strategic marketing makes our hotel ready for crises” ($p=0.001$). When examining these four statements according to the hotels’ star rankings, it can be observed that the managers of five-star hotels tend to support these statements more than those of the four-star hotels. In other statements, no statistically - meaningful differences could be found pertaining to star ranking. At this point, it can be said that strategic marketing planning and its implementation can vary according to star-ranking. Hence, the first hypothesis of the research which is :

H1: There are differences in the strategic marketing planning implemented in four and five-star hotels.” is accepted for fourth, sixth, seventh and ninth statements and is refused for other statements.

When the two independent samples are too small, a non-parametric technique can be used to analyze the transient data (either categorized or ranked). This technique is referred to as the Fisher’s Exact Test for 2×2 Tables, used for testing hypotheses where columns and rows are independent from one another when the obtained points from two random independent samples are in one of the two independent categories. The points are shown in a 2×2 contingency table. Under the conditions for which Chi-square test cannot be used - in other words, when the smallest expected frequency is smaller than 5 - the Fisher test can be applied, instead. In Table 7 and Table 8, an analysis is done using the Fisher’s Exact Test for 2×2 Tables.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

H2: There is a connection between determining the target market and implementing strategic marketing planning in four and five-star hotels.

In Table 7, the relationship between the implementing a target market analysis and the preparing a strategic marketing planning is demonstrated. According to the Fisher's Exact Test for 2x2 Tables ($p=0.052$), a relationship has been found between these two variable at a significance level of $p<0.10$. When the table is examined, one can see the contributors who claim that they do target market analysis also declare that they prepare strategic marketing planning, while the others who say they do not have target market analysis also declare they do not prepare strategic marketing planning. Based on this, the second hypothesis of the research is accepted:

H2: There is a connection between determining the target market and the implementing strategic marketing planning in four and five-star hotels.

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

H3: There is a connection between the presence of a marketing department in four- and five-star hotel and the preparation of strategic marketing planning.

In Table 8, the two corresponding questions have been analyzed. These two questions are "Is there a sales and/or marketing department in your hotel?" and "Does your hotel

prepare its own strategic marketing planning?” According to Fisher’s Exact Test, there is no relationship between these two variables ($p=0.599$). Hence, the third hypothesis of the research is rejected:

H3: There is a connection between the presence of a marketing department in four- and five-star hotel and the preparation of strategic marketing planning.

On the other hand, looking at the small range between the variables one can arrive at certain conclusions. The contributors who claim they only have marketing department / they have both sales and marketing department also state that their hotel prepares its own strategic marketing plan. The positive response to the statement that there is just sales department / their sales and/or marketing department is in another department is, though, too limited and because of this, the answers related with the preparation of strategic marketing planning is also too limited. Upon this examination, it can be said that in the hotels in which sales and marketing departments are present, strategic marketing planning is handled more seriously.

INSERT TABLE 9 HERE

As seen in Table 9, there are some significant differences in the levels of $p<0.05$ when the statements related with the strategic marketing are analyzed with regards to the bed capacity variable. The statements which show differences statistically are as below:

“We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy ($p=0.018$), “We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network” ($p=0.019$), “The understanding of strategic marketing makes our hotel ready for crises” ($p=0.022$). When the averages of these three

statements are taken, it can be seen that it is high in hotels which have a capacity exceeding 300 beds, implying that bigger firms establish more cooperation, take more advantage of the internet, and have a high level of perception concerning strategic marketing planning against crises. Upon reflections, it is possible to offer three new hypotheses to the afore-mentioned three hypotheses;

H4: There is a relationship between incorporating strategic marketing planning and hotels' bed capacities.

H5: There is a relationship between establishing various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) and hotels' bed capacities.

H6: There is a relationship between taking more advantage of the internet and hotels' bed capacities.

INSERT TABLE 10 HERE

The two other questions of the survey were analyzed together and the relationship is shown in Table 10. The first question is related with the analyses used in strategic marketing planning, and the second one with the employee participation in the preparation process. According to this, there is no significant relationship between the analysis methods and the employee participation. Besides this, a different case occurs in the analysis of this table; as it is well known, financial analyses are the ones to be performed by specialists, meaning that, the participation of other employees may not be required in most cases. Whereas, according to the table, the hotels that use financial analysis while preparing strategic marketing planning stated that their employees had participated in the preparation process (58%). In this case, it can be said that in hotels that affirmatively respond this question, their employees either do not participate in the process in real sense of the word, or they may regard their financial

analysis specialists participation as employee participation. On top of these, the hotels that use status analysis, environment analysis, SWOT analysis, and value chain analysis claim that their employees' participation is high as well. Based on these explanations, a new hypothesis can be formed:

H7: There is no relationship between the analysis used in the preparation of strategic marketing planning and the participation of employees in the process.

DISCUSSION

91.8% of the participant hotels declare that they make target market analysis, and 73.5% of them say that they prepare strategic marketing plan.

The hotel managers demonstrate a high level of approval regarding the statement "We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network". According to Kotler and Armstrong (2004), the internet enables consumers and firms to reach a wide range of information and to share such information by clicking on buttons. The internet has turned into the most accessible and valid means of accessing the information. Previous researches show that consumers conduct research on internet regarding goods and services before making a decision to buy them. In conclusion, it is stated that firms should have internet technology to keep pace with today's competitive marketplace; otherwise, they will be subject to a lot of risks. Furthermore, as mentioned before, tourists reach information related with the destination for their international travels on the internet, and travel agencies also make tourist reservation on the internet, such that the need for the internet for an extended marketing network cannot be ignored. Taking advantage from the internet for both promotion and marketing activities has, therefore, become an indispensable tool for tourism businesses which may derive from both the wish for reaching a larger group of target people and the demand of the industry itself. These reasons and the like may be among the

underlying causes for the managers of our corresponding hotels to have agreed with this statement, believing in the need to benefit from the internet. This clearly points out the significance of the internet in a fast, globalised market.

Another statement that has received affirmative responses is that: “We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy.” Two important elements in marketing strategy is the target market and the marketing mix. Tourism businesses should select channels with which can reach their target market and add some additional concepts to their marketing mix, such as customer relationship as well as forming services in order to shape a successful marketing strategy. According to Hill and Jones (2004), firms can make strategic cooperations in order to achieve their various strategic goals. Firms should reach their target market in order to have a successful marketing strategy. In order to reach these markets, they should make strategic cooperations. In today’s competitive environment, it can be easily witnessed that businesses are heading towards further strategic cooperations. According to Ulgen and Mirze (2006), another type of strategic cooperation is the one made among airline companies. The Star Alliance (Lufthansa, United, SAS, Air Canada, Thai, e.t.c.), Qualiflyer (Swissair, Sabena, Austrian Airlines, e.t.c.) and Wings (Northwest, Continental, KLM, Alitalia, Air France,e.t.c.) can be given as examples of such cooperations, -usually regarded as ‘mergers’-. Similar examples can be seen in hotel businesses where managers tend to increase their rate of being preferred by making price agreements with embassies, travel agencies, and companies as well as on mileage programs with airline companies. Such applications in the industry, therefore, show that the high affirmative respond to this statement is normal.

According to the findings of the research, there is a high level of agreement to the statement “Changes in the economic environment affect our marketing plan”. Strategic marketing plan enables the marketing aims and goals of the business to go in line with the

changing and uncertain environments in the long-run. Although strategic marketing plan makes a firm prepared for crisis, changes in the economic environment affects marketing plans, and, therefore, they need to be revised periodically. It can be said that the participating managers who have agreed with this statement think in the same way.

The statement “Awareness of strategic marketing makes our hotel ready for crises” has responded affirmatively by contributors. Marketing activities have an important position in a firm’s operation-based activities. In the same way, strategic marketing planning plays an important role in general strategic planning, this requiring firms to have handle their activities upon a critical point of view. This point of view, being strategic, guides firms before, during and after the crises. Such a satisfaction can be the reason behind the participant’s approving of the statement.

“Sales and marketing is just the duty of the sales and marketing department in our hotel” is the statement where our contributors responded less positively. Eren (2002) states that firms’ environmental dependency begins with suppliers and ends with consumers. If a firm creates a value, this value results either from business processes or from the environmental dependence relationships. If internal logistics, functions, external logistics, marketing, and sales and after-sales services are considered as facilities that shape value chain, any changes in any part of the firm can affect the whole system either positively or negatively. Sales and marketing facilities can be affected by the changes in the industry, after-sales services, and feedback from customers. Consequently, sales and marketing and all other business facilities at this stage are not only the business of sales and marketing department, they become the duties of the whole firm.

The increasing presence of Turkish tourism in the world puts forth the fact that all stakeholders of this sector should think strategically. Tourism businesses should think a foot forward and arrange their activities in order to survive in this comparatively new and favorite

sector. Success in the different departments within the business brings about prosperity of the business itself on the general. The importance of marketing activities for the firms that facilitate in comparatively new sectors like tourism is inevitable. Having said so, preparing a strategic plan for such an important activity enables firms to be several steps ahead of their competitors.

With the help of the managers of a number of four- and five-star chain hotels in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya, this paper has endeavoured to understand in detail the concept of strategic marketing planning applied therein. In detail the research has examined the following highlights concerning strategic marketing planning:

- making business policies compatible with the conditions of the region;
- the duty of sales and marketing departments;
- awareness of the strengths against competitors which provides advantage when preparing marketing plan;
- changes in the economic environment and their impact on the plan;
- the impact of legal regulations in tourism industry against the market;
- making various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy;
- taking advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network;
- establishing a common database for enabling data transfer between hotels and travel agencies; and
- overall awareness of strategic marketing planning and its related concepts.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Tourism businesses operate in very complex and changing environments. Therefore, having a strategic plan for these firms is not a topic that can be ignored. This is an obligation

in order to create a more sustainable activity and to be ready for crises. Strategic plans are very important, especially for marketing activities.

The education of the employees is an obligation for the creation of a good strategic marketing plan or a strategic plan in general. It is true that the preparation of a strategic plan is the duty of strategists, but employee training is necessary for their integration into this plan.

While preparing the marketing plan, it is highly advisable, first of all, an executive summary of the activities of the business be drafted, and the main points of marketing planning determined. After this, a status analysis that contains internal environment analysis, consumer environment analysis, external environment analysis, and a SWOT analysis that determines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats should be done. After the SWOT analysis, the SWOT matrix should be analyzed to determine the strategic focus. Then, the marketing aims and goals and marketing strategies of the firm are to be declared. The next step is to make a marketing application in order to revise the structural issues and tactical marketing activities. In the last stage, the evaluation and control of marketing plan should be made. This last stage includes the financial evaluation of marketing planning as well as marketing control.

The employee participation in the implementation process of strategic marketing planning is important. On the other hand, some analyses that is in the preparation process of strategic marketing planning should be undertaken by specialists. It is possible to include employees in the process for SWOT analysis and situation analysis, but some analysis like financial analysis should be carried tree only by specialists.

In hotel businesses, the guests' recommendations and complaints that are obtained through guest satisfaction measurement methods should be carefully accounted for, and the guests are to be informed about the results. In this way, hotel businesses can create a sense of commitment and customer value.

In addition to this, hotel businesses need to insure the quality of their services in order to form a good marketing strategy. An important way of enabling service quality is cooperation with suppliers. It should not be forgotten that the concept of quality known among travel agencies, tour operators, and the firms supplying the products affects the service quality of the hotel, and is enhanced through the cooperation established among the parties involved.

FUTURE WORK

Additional research will be ideal and vital as to the creation of strategic planning systems, the implementation methods of the strategic plans, shortages and/or pitfalls confronted during the planning process, the relationship between performance and strategic marketing planning, and long-term perspective analyses.

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Table 1. The Implementation of Target Market Analysis

Target Market Analysis		N	%
Yes	Y	4	9
		5	1,8
No	N	4	8
			,2
Total	T	4	1
		9	00,0

Table .2. The Criterias Used in Target Market Selection

Criteria	Importance point
Frequency in service usage	169
Demographic features	119
Life style	96
Geographic features	92

Points given between 1 and 5.

Table.3.Having a Marketing Strategy

Marketing Strategy	n	%
Yes	4	9,8
No	5	0,2
Total	9	100,0

Table 4. The Preparation of Strategic Marketing Planning

Strategic Marketing Planning	n	%
Yes	6	3,5
No	3	6,5
Total	9	100,0

Table 5. Participation Level to the Statements Related with Strategic Marketi

	1		2		3		4		5			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	Avrg.	Std.Dev.
We make our business policy compatible with the conditions of the region that we work in					4	8,2	0	1,2	5	0,6	4,22	0,587
Sales and marketing is just the duty of sales and marketing department in our hotel	9	8,8	4	8,6	5	0,2	7	4,3	4	8,2	2,24	1,331
Being aware of our strength against competitors provides convenience us while preparing marketing plan	1	2,00			2	4,1	6	3,1	0	0,8	4,31	0,742
Changes in the economic environment affect our marketing plan					3	6,1	5	1,0	1	2,9	,37	0,602
Our marketing plan is affected by the legal regulations that are made for tourism industry			2	4,1	8	6,7	2	4,5	5	0,6	,85	0,932
We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.) in order to form a successful marketing strategy					1	2,00	5	1,0	2	4,9	,44	0,542
We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network					1	2,00	6	2,7	1	3,3	,63	0,531
We establish common database for enabling data transfer between our hotel and travel agencies			1	2	1	2,4	7	4,7	9	8,8	,13	0,841
Awareness of strategic marketing make our hotel ready for crises					5	0,2	1	2,9	2	4,9	,35	0,668

Table 6. The participation level of hotel directors to the statements related with strategic marketing according to their star rank

	rank	n	Avrg.	Std.Dev.	t	p
We make our business policy compatible with the conditions of the region that we work in	Four-star	13	4,15	0,555	-0,502	0,618
	Five-star	36	4,25	0,604		
Sales and marketing is just the duty of sales and marketing department in our hotel	Four-star	13	2,69	1,182	1,429	0,16
	Five-star	36	2,08	1,360		
Being aware of our strength against competitors provides convenience us while preparing marketing plan	Four-star	13	4,00	1,000	-1,774	0,082
	Five-star	36	4,42	0,604		
Changes in economic environment affect our marketing plan	Four-star	13	4,08	0,641	-2,101	0,041**
	Five-star	36	4,47	0,560		
Our marketing plan is affected by the legal regulations that are made for tourism industry	Four-star	12	3,58	0,900	-1,157	0,253
	Five-star	35	3,94	0,938		
We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.)in order to form a successful marketing strategy	Four-star	12	4,17	0,577	-2,067	0,044**
	Five-star	36	4,53	0,506		
We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network	Four-star	12	4,25	0,622	-3,067	0,004**
	Five-star	36	4,75	0,439		
We establish common database for enabling data transfer between our hotel and travel agencies.	Four-star	12	4,00	0,739	-0,59	0,558
	Five-star	36	4,17	0,878		
Awareness of strategic marketing make our hotel ready for crises	Four-star	12	3,83	0,718	-3,464	0,001**
	Five-star	36	4,53	0,560		

Table.7. The Relationship Between the Implementation of Target Market Analysis and The Preparation of Strategic Marketing Planning

			Strategic Marketing Planning		Total
			Yes	No	
Target Market Analysis	Yes	n	35	10	45
		%	77,8	22,2	100,0
	No	n	1	3	4
		%	25	75	100,0
Total		n	36	13	49
		%	73,5	26,5	100,0

Table. 8. The Relationship Between the Presence of Sales/Marketing Department in the Hotel and The Preparation of Strategic Marketing Planning

			Strategic Marketing Planning		Total
			Yes	No	
Department	Just sales department / It is in another department	n	4	1	5
		%	80	20	100,0
	Just marketing department/ Both of them	n	32	12	44
		%	72,7	27,3	100,0
Total		n	36	13	49
		%	73,5	26,5	100,0

Table 9.Examining the statements related with strategic marketing according to the bed capacity of hotel

	Bed capacity of the hotel	n	Average	Std.Dev.	t	p
We make our business policy compatible with the conditions of the region that we work in	300 and less	27	4,26	0,526	0,456	0,651
	More than 300	22	4,18	0,665		
Sales and marketing is just the duty of sales and marketing department in our hotel	300 and less	27	2,44	1,220	1,167	0,249
	More than 300	22	2,00	1,447		
Being aware of our strength against competitors provides convenience us while preparing marketing plan	300 and less	27	4,15	0,818	-1,683	0,099
	More than 300	22	4,50	0,598		
Changes in economic environment affect our marketing plan	300 and less	27	4,26	0,594	-1,407	0,166
	More than 300	22	4,50	0,598		
Our marketing plan is affected by the legal regulations that are made for tourism industry	300 and less	26	3,69	4	-1,309	0,197
	More than 300	21	4,05	0,973		
We make various cooperations (with travel agencies, tour operators, embassies, e.t.c.)in order to form a successful marketing strategy	300 and less	26	4,27	0,533	-2,46	0,018**
	More than 300	22	4,64	0,492		
We take advantage of the internet for establishing a widespread marketing network	300 and less	26	4,46	0,582	-2,438	0,019**
	More than 300	22	4,82	0,395		
We establish common database for enabling data transfer between our hotel and travel agencies	300 and less	26	4,00	0,800	-1,122	0,268
	More than 300	22	4,27	0,883		
Awareness of strategic marketing make our hotel ready for crises	300 and less	26	4,15	0,732	-2,366	0,022**
	More than 300	22	4,59	0,503		

Table 10 The Analysis Method Used In The Process of the Preparation of the Strategic Marketing Plan and Employee Participation to This Process

		Employee Participation			Total	Chi-Square
		Yes	No	Moderate		
Status	N	12	1	9	22	0,174
Analysis	%	0,55	0,05	0,40	1,00	
Environment	N	7	0	7	14	2,127
Analysis	%	0,50	0,00	0,50	1,00	
SWOT	N	19	2	12	33	1,122
Analysis	%	0,58	0,06	0,36	1,00	
Value Chain	N	6	0	6	12	1,671
Analysis	%	0,50	0,00	0,50	1,00	
Financial	N	14	0	10	24	4,243
Analysis	%	0,58	0,00	0,42	1,00	
Balance	N	3	1	6	10	3,707
Scorecard	%	0,30	0,10	0,60	1,00	
Total	N	20	2	14	36	
	%	0,56	0,06	0,39	1,00	