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From the Editors

In this issue of HOSTEUR™, we bring you six wonderful articles. The common theme of four peer reviewed articles is lodging management. The leading article is from Ersem Karadag of Robert Morris University. Dr. Karadag looks at the leadership style and financial performance riddle in the lodging industry. His article is followed by graduate student Ozgur Ozdemir of University of Delaware and Dr. Srikanth Beldona. They look at information technology measurement techniques in the hotel industry. A Penn State graduate, Emily Goretsky and Dr. David Cranage tackle the impact of health and fitness on hotel choice. Drs. Aksu and Koksal look at the impact of terrorism events on the perceptions of hospitality and tourism management students.

In the non-peer reviewed section, we have two articles. Graduate student Valentini Kalargyrou and Bob Woods of UNLV make suggestions for Europeans who consider expatriating to the United States. Finally, one of the Co-Editors of HOSTEUR™, Dr. Cihan Cobanoglu shared his personal experiences of using Wikis in a group project in the classroom.

Please consider submitting articles to HOSTEUR™. We look forward to receiving them.

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The Leadership Style and Financial Performance Riddle in the Lodging Industry: What is the Best Fit?

by Ersem Karadag, Ph.D.

Introduction

Leadership is the focus of attention in business enterprises and plays a key role in the success of every organization. Business leaders are responsible for achieving growth, managing capital and maintaining financial viability. In every area of industry, profitable enterprises lead to higher rates of growth, more new jobs, better cash flow and higher market valuation (Weathersby, 1998). Without any doubt, all business managers in charge of a company have the obligation to deliver positive financial results to create shareholder value. Therefore, at every level, shareholders or their representatives choose managing leaders with the maximization of profits in mind. The firm profitability in turn, is determined by the levels of innovation or proposal generation encouraged within the organization in an environment wherein employees are encouraged to propose and later implement new methods that would be enhance company performance (Rotemberg, 1993). This imperative is inescapable and has to be carried by leading the firm through uncertain and volatile times. However, when it comes to what leadership style to demonstrate and what management style has to be adopted to accomplish a business’ core objectives, the owners and managers are utterly puzzled and confused about what management style is appropriate for their respective firms to achieve desired goals.

In the hospitality industry, shareholders or owners use a number of criteria for selecting or appraising the success of a hospitality manager, including financial indices, managerial behaviors, and outcome measures in the form of business objectives to be achieved (Umbreit et al., 1986). Case in point regarding financial indices would be when a hotel’s occupancy and revenues meet budget projections whilst costs and labor turnover are controlled, and then a property’s general manager (GM) can be fairly confident of receiving a favorable performance evaluation from the board of directors, shareholders or from the owner. This may be one indicator to measure the performance of a GM; however, when it comes to selection process, owners, professional managers, and researchers, need to know much more about what effective managers actually do on a day-to-day basis to produce desired results. This information will help those employers to employ appropriate tools in choosing the most suitable leadership style for their respective properties. Therefore, in this study at first, we will draw a framework of hospitality leadership and then focus our attention on the previous leadership studies conducted in the hospitality industry. Second, we will report the conclusions of those studies describing the leadership characteristics of general managers in successful lodging properties and elaborate on the impact of management style on profitability in the lodging industry.

Leadership/Management Style and Financial Performance

As a part of hospitality industry, hotels may have an attractive atmosphere, a sophisticated design, may be located in a very convenient location, but in the eyes of the owner they are businesses, like any other. The people who own these hotels are expecting to make more money than they are investing. Today, many of the hotels in the United States are owned by real estate developers, wealthy business and professional people, and large institutional investors, such as insurance companies or investment funds. These investors often do not know much about how to run a hotel business. For this reason they usually make arrangements with professional or institutionalized hotel management companies to run the hotel. For these owners, the business is just an investment and of course it is the bottom line profit that is of utmost importance to these owners. The key motivation for investing in a hotel is profit and the more profits, the better. Therefore, from the standpoint of hotel managers there is incredible pressure to perform in the hotel business, no matter what circumstances.
The concept of profit is related to a manager’s performance of those people who manage a hotel property. At the same time, the profitability is a criterion for measuring the effectiveness of business organizations. Performance measures are usually either financial or operational. Financial measures include metrics such as profit maximization, shareholder wealth maximization, and maximizing return on assets. On the other hand, growth in sales, growth in market share and sales per employee are examples of operational performance measures. Furthermore, some successful companies use a range of performance measures. Furthermore some successful companies use a range of economic measures to describe the performance of an organization (Bear, Benson-Armer, and Hal, 2000). Withful strategies depend on their leadership characteristics. Financial or non-financial rewards can be utilized for this purpose. In particular, because top managers have the responsibilities for the overall performance of their firms, these individuals have the strongest effect on the firm’s strategic management process (Ireland and Hitt 1999). Organizational effectiveness depends on the ability of a business leader of an organization (Herbert and Deresky, 1987). Thus, effective hotel managers need to possess specific management skills and personal characteristics to achieve predetermined goals. In this venue, hotel general managers occupy a crucial role in the midst of hotel operations.

“Effective hotel managers need to possess specific management skills and personal characteristics to achieve predetermined goals.”

All these in mind, a leader’s first element is to direct and motivate employees to make a bottom line profit. Ireland and Hitt (1999) state that “without effective leadership the chance of achieving these goals and competitive performance is minimal.”

A primary activity of any type of leader involves motivating and reinforcing others to encourage superior performance (Whetten and Cameron, 1991). Within the framework of performance, which leadership activities of a business leader have an impact on organizational performance become a crucial question that needs to be replied. Business leaders play different roles in their daily activities and they are able to use different types of management tools to increase the financial performance of the firm through implementation of success-

The decisions they make in this strategic position play a large part in determining the effectiveness of the hotel staff and the satisfaction of the hotel guest. Whether the properties they manage provide superior service and realize their profit potential is largely a function of general managers’ expertise.

Studies on Leadership/Management Style in the Hospitality Industry

Whenever hospitality literature focuses on leadership/management style and financial performance relationship we come to the point where we have substantial explanation of this “mysterious” relationship. In the literature, much of the research provides a good framework and explores the relationship between leadership styles and managerial effectiveness. One of the earliest attempts to explore the effectiveness of leadership styles in the hospitality industry was conducted by Nebel and Sterns in 1977 by utilizing the contingency theory of leadership, which states that most appropriate leadership style, would be determined by situational variables found in a particular job setting. The results of this study suggest a use of a task-oriented leadership style for the hospitality industry. The authors also argued that differing conditions might call for different styles not only between establishments but also within the departments of a given establishment.

Three years later, Ley (1980), examined the daily activities of general managers at seven comparable hotel properties to determine how they allocated their time to various managerial roles. When the leadership and entrepreneurial activities of the surveyed managers are examined, it appears that highly effective managers allocate time to those two roles differently than less effective managers of similar hotels do: effective managers spend less time on leadership, but more time on entrepreneurial activities.

Arnaldo in 1981 examined the profiles of 270 hotel general managers. The general managers were asked to evaluate their performance with the following seven criteria:

- payroll/room sales
- room rate
- payroll/food & beverage sales
- occupancy
- room sales/rooms payroll
- room sales/number of employee

The ratio of ‘payroll to room sales’ received the most endorsement as an indicator of successful performance. The ‘average annual room rate’ was also judged to be a relatively appropriate indicator, as was the ratio of payroll to food and beverage sales. While the bottom line has undeniable importance in the evaluation of general managers’ performance, the participating GMs believed that other, more qualitative considerations should also be addressed in the evaluation of their performance rather than simply
using dollar values. This research also makes some recommendations for the future training of GM's in accounting and finance area. Furthermore, the managerial roles of leader, monitor, disseminator and entrepreneur are judged to be important, and found crucial.

Umberit and Eder (1987) investigated the link between managerial behaviors and outcomes associated with property effectiveness in the hotel industry. They asked the participants to write down important outcome measures that a typical hotel manager should have control over and against which their performance should be evaluated. The relationship between outcome measures and each behavioral dimension of managerial performance showed that, the outcome measures such as ‘rooms’ divisional profit’ and ‘food and beverage departmental profit’ emerged as important link to a number of behavioral dimensions.

In 1989, Worslord examined the relationship between leadership characteristics and effectiveness of hotel managers. Worslord identified four leadership factors but a large proportion of the differences in behavior accounted for by two independent factors entitled, “consideration” and “initiating structure.” According to this study, hotel general managers obtained a high score for “consideration” typical of individuals who maintain good interpersonal relationship with subordinates who are characterized by mutual trust, respect and consideration of feelings. “Initiating structure” is a measure of the extent to which managers organize and define group activities.

Cichy and Sciarini (1990) studied leadership qualities of presidents and CEOs in the lodging industry. That study followed another research conducted by Cichy, Sciarini and Patton (1991) on the leadership qualities of CEOs and presidents in the noncommercial food-service industry. In both research projects, the findings were clear: attributes related to vision, communication, trust, and perseverance were considered most important by leaders. The researchers argued that there may be four foundations of effective leadership. These are the abilities to:

1. develop and provide a compelling vision,
2. earn and return trust,
3. listen and communicate effectively, and
4. persevere when others give up.

Tracey and Hinkin (1994) reported the results of a study of leadership in a large hotel management firm that had been successful over the last several years. They examined the behavior associated with both transformational and transactional leadership style. They found that there were clear differences between the two types of leaders. The behavior exhibited most frequently by the effective leader was “transformational.” That type of leader was viewed as competent, showing a high degree of persistence in performing the job, had the organization’s best interest in mind, and behaved consistently with expressed values and beliefs. In contrast, the ineffective leader’s most frequently reported actions were all “transactional.”

Morey and Dittman (1995) evaluated and compared similar hotel general managers’ performance with each other. They developed benchmarks for a group of hotel scores for efficiency. By using such scores one can determine whether operation efficiencies are achievable or whether the manager has employed the optimal level of resources for the revenue and service levels achieved. According to this research it has been found that the profitability of a hotel whose manager is inefficient most likely can be improved if the manager’s efficiency is increased. In that case that study just confirmed the already known diagnosis rather than offering any insight into solving this problem.

According to the research conducted by Boehnke, Bontis, DiStefano, and DiStefano, (2002) it is revealed that transformational leadership behaviors are related to exceptional performance. Managers would be advised to use these behaviors to generate high performance. It is said that most organizations demand that their leaders produce this type of success, yet these leaders may be unaware of how their style affects performance.

(continued on Page 8)
Discussion

Understanding the relationship between leadership style and financial performance is important to all hospitality companies, industry professionals and researchers. The work has done to date has explored some of the key managerial attributes that are important to the well-being of lodging companies. While it is apparent that the impact of leadership style on financial performance is evident, leadership style should not be the single factor in assessing the intangible attributes possessed by the hotel general managers. Since all firms compete in a business domain that is affected by the forces of the environment the business operates in, it will be safe to conclude that there is no universal managerial style that can be applied to all kinds of business environments and situations. Appropriate leadership style seems to be a function of situational variables and personal attributes of managers. Therefore, the ideal match between these two will continue to be one of the key points that differentiate hospitality companies from each other. The major point for decision makers, such as owners, management companies or others, is to find the ideal match to maximize the financial performance of a lodging property.

References


Introduction

Keen (1995) described information technology (IT) as a generally accepted umbrella term for a rapidly expanding range of equipment, applications, services, and basic technologies which has become very important in today's business world. "IT has become an organizational necessity to support routine data processing operations, initiatives for competitive advantage, business transformation exercises in products, organizational structures, work roles, and patterns of relationships between organizations" (Serafeimidis, 2001, p. 58). Hence, as companies embrace technology more and more in their organizational structures, the value of IT tends to increase at an unprecedented rate. In contrary to supportive role of IT in the history, today companies view IT as a strategic enabler to better operate their businesses and gain a competitive advantage over their competitors (Nyheim, McFadden & Connolly, 2004). Nyheim et al. (2004) note it that IT is an important resource vital to a firm's success, and it can no longer be viewed simply for its support and utility roles dominant in tactical applications that zero in on the use of IT to obtain efficiency, reduce costs, and decrease labor, but instead it should be rather viewed as a resource that creates competitive advantage or enables new business opportunities (See Figure 1. for shifting IT roles in organizations). Recent development in IT reshaped the ways firms operate their businesses; it enabled the firms to redesign the business processes, strengthen their customer relationship management, and develop a new business model (Lee, 2004). Information intensive business organizations such as hotels (Law & Jogaratnam, 2005) have begun to utilize the IT to create new knowledge, manage existing knowledge, distribute information, and facilitate inter-organizational collaboration (Lee, 2004).

As Lee (2004) describes business process redesign is one area where business strategy and IT have played a crucial role. If we look at the history across the general business landscape, we can see many large companies that invested in IT and yielded enormous financial benefits along with gaining competitive advantages (Nyheim et al., 2004). American Airlines and its SABRE reservation system, FedEx and its PowerShip shipping and package tracking software, WalMart and its supply chain management technology, Hertz and its system for customized personal computers (Nyheim et al., 2004), Caterpillar’s inventory control systems, Baxter International’s stockless inventory system and BankOne’s mortgage application process (Lee, 2004) are few to name. Apparently, these investments on IT initiatives are obvious success stories and benefited enormous financial benefits to the firms that have undertaken these projects. However, not all IT investment project is that much fortune to survive and promising financial benefits to the firms. Some of the IT projects fail sometimes at the initial phases, or even at the planning phases. In some instances, once the firms have started the potentially failure investments they must carry out the projects to the end and inevitably face the entire financial and emotional burdens. These projects are, no doubt, killer projects and should be prevented well before they come to alive. Besides them, there are the disruptive technologies. The term disruptive technology refers to technologies that are introducing a different performance package from the mainstream technologies and are inferior to mainstream technologies pertaining to dimensions of performance that are most important to main stream customers (Adner, 2002). Christensen (1997), the innovator of the disruptive technology concept, explains the disruptive (continued on Page 10)
technologies as the innovations that promises worse performance than the mainstream technologies; and characterizes them as cheaper, simpler and smaller in size. Therefore, when considering a new technology, the pros and cons of undertaking this endeavor should be well analyzed. Whether or not a particular investment seems to return benefits, if it could turn out to be a disruptive technology and eventually results in fruitless efforts and huge financial loss should all be considered. Thus, measuring the value of IT investments is a crucial task that has to be carefully undertaken in order to portray the potential benefits and risks of relevant IT projects and recognize the importance of these projects to the companies.

Literature Review
IT Investment Decisions
Apostolopoulos and Pramataris (1997) describes an IT investment as any acquisition of software or hardware which is expected to expand or increase the business benefits of an organization’s information systems (IS) and render long-term benefits. Companies’ efforts in putting their investment dollars in IT is continuous and they are usually large and increasing (Grembergen & Saull, 2001). IT investments make up almost 50 percent of all capital expenditures of large organizations (Earl, 1989). Supportively, a Fortune Magazine study (1993) showed that IT accounted for over 14 percent of US capital investments in 1993, compared to 8 percent in 1980 (Lee, 2004). Thus, IT represents a substantial investment area for most organizations.

Dos Santos (2003) states that most IT investment decisions are based on the intuition, fear, and following what other firms in the environment have done. Further, Nyheim et al. (2004) add that in addition to reasons indentified by Dos Santos, firms also invest in IT to acquire competitive advantage over their immediate competitors. Following these motives, companies continually confront with new IT investment opportunities; and decisions are extremely critical to the profitability of the company. While well-structured and underpinned projects may return incremental profits to the firm, poorly-designed and weak IT projects may turn to be complete loses to the firm. Hence, the decision makers should well consider the pros and cons of individual IT projects and eliminate the feeble ones. Chief Information Officers (CIOs), or other IT executives/managers who are in charge of managing IT workflow and investments, must always keep in mind that there will always be pressure on them from the business executives as regards to wisely spending of IT dollars; and business executives will often require them to quantify the return in technology investments (Kramer, 2005). However, As Powell (1992) claims that costs and benefits are hard to indentify and quantify and many intangible factors play a role in IT investments, therefore evaluating the return of IT investments is often more difficult and challenging than many other investment decisions. However, no matter how difficult is it to measure the IT investments, it should be done.

IT investments in the Hotel Industry
Hotel industry usually has failed to follow the technological advancements in and out of their business lines, and always have been reluctant to take the lead in implementing a new kind of technology (Cho and Olsen, 1998; Sheld on, 1997). However, with the increasing demand for intensive information from customers and hotel practitioners, they have started adapting computer-based IT facilities to boost operational efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance service quality (Cobanoglu, Corbachi & Ryan, 2001). As is seen, improving productivity is the primary motive of implementing IT in the hotel industry, though the information resources have long played an important role in carrying out successful hotel operations (Ham, Kim & Jeong, 2005). Customers and partners tend to put a greater emphasis on organizations that have come to understanding of importance of IT and implemented it to some extent in their organizations (Ham et al., 2005). Ham et al. add that “technology is gradually becoming a source of sustainable competitive advantage in the hospitality industry, particularly in the areas of description, promotion, distribution, amalgamation, organization, and delivery of hospitality products.

Researchers in the fields of finance and technology establish many techniques and methods to augment the value of IT investments. In the next section these techniques are further detailed.

Investment Measurement Techniques
Lin and Pervan (2001, p.3) define the IT investment evaluation as “the weighing up process to rationally access the value of any acquisition of software or hardware which is expected to improve the business value of an organization’s information systems”. From this definition, it can be derived that evaluation can be considered as a process to defect the malfunctions and to recommend proper planning and treatment by providing feedback information and contributing to organizational planning (Lin & Pervan, 2001). They further add that evaluation is generally aimed at the identification and quantification of costs and benefits.

A significant number of methods and techniques has been proposed to assess in the evaluation
of IT investment proposals; and many researchers have identified lots of methods that all aim at helping the evaluation of IT investment proposals. These methods and techniques can be classified in two groups as non-financial and financial tools. Berghout and Renkema (2001) define financial evaluation techniques as the ones that deal with monetary impacts of the proposed IT investments; and non-financial techniques as the ones that deal with the non-monetary impacts of IT investments but have contribution to the organization. These two categories and their methods are examined in more detail in the following sections.

Financial Methods

Discounted Cash Flow Methods

i. Net Present Value

Dos Santos (2003) stresses that a standard method to evaluate the corporate investments is discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis. As the IT investments are part of whole investment initiatives of a firm, DCF can be also simply regarded as a way of measuring IT investments. Dos Santos explains DCF as an analysis that determines the value of an investment by discounting the expected value of each period’s cash flow by a risk-adjusted discount rate. Discounted cash flow analysis generally accepted by many authors and practitioners in the industry is a major technique to evaluate the investments made at corporate-level as well as at property-level. As Dos Santos puts it out it is not used only for IT investments but also for appraising all investments of firms in myriad investment areas. DCF method can be viewed as the major measurement techniques to find out the potential value and risk of a presumed investment project. Discounted cash method can also be referred as the net present value analysis (NPV). In financial terms NPV refers to the present value of an investment’s all future annual after-tax net cash flows less the investment’s initial outlay (Keown, Martin, Petty & Scott, 2001). If this value is greater than zero, it is considered to be wise to go ahead with this investment (Berghout & Renkema, 2001). This technique of measuring the value of an IT investment is most appropriate in the phase of assessing the values of proposed IT projects. Since all proposed projected cannot be undertaken at once, the ones with higher NPVs can be given priority and be seriously considered for implementation. Below is the simple NPV formula to be taken as the basis in assessing any IT investment projects as well as many other areas projects.

\[
NPV = \sum_{t=1}^{n} \frac{FCF_t}{(1+k)^t} - IO, \text{ where}
\]

\[
FCF_t = \text{the annual free cash flow in time period } t
\]

\[
k = \text{the appropriate discount rate; that is, the required rate of return or cost of capital}
\]

\[
IO = \text{the initial cash outlay}
\]

\[
n = \text{the project’s expected life}
\]

ii. Internal Rate of Return

Berghout and Renkema (2001) describe internal rate of return (IRR) as the threshold at which, after discounting the incoming and outgoing cash flows, the net present values equals zero. They further add that if this threshold is greater than the opportunity cost of capital, the investment is considered to be worthwhile to be undertaken. IRR is calculated by using the following formula:

\[
\text{IF} = \sum_{t=1}^{n} \frac{FCF_t}{(1+IRR)^t}
\]

\[
FCF_t = \text{the annual free cash flow in time period } t
\]

\[
\text{IO} = \text{the initial cash outlay}
\]

\[
n = \text{the project’s expected life}
\]

\[
\text{IRR} = \text{the project’s internal rate of return}
\]

Payback Period

Berghout and Renkema (2001) describe the payback period as the period between the moment that an IT investment is funded and the moment that the total sum of the investment is recovered through the net incoming cash flows. It measures how quickly an IT investment returns the initial investment. The sooner the better is the decision criteria for an IT project to be considered for implementation. The accept-reject criteria relies on if the project’s payback period is less than or equal to a firm’s desired payback period. For example, if a hotel company is investing $3 million on CRM project and its maximum payback period for that project is 3 years, it has to realize $1 million cost savings annually to cover the initial investment in 3 years.

Non-Financial Evaluation Methods

Researchers’ efforts in assessing the value of IT investments have gone well beyond the use financial metrics, and they proposed non-financial methods to appraise the value of investments. There are many methods and metrics developed by numerous researchers. In this section, information economics, balance score cards, and IT assessment method will be scrutinized.

i. Information Economics

Information economics multi-criteria method of Parker (Berghout & Renkema, 2001) is one of the well-known methods in the field of evaluating IT investment proposals. It is basically defined as a scoring method that points out the value of the information that results from the use of the system (Dykman, 2003). Dykman claims that this is a relatively difficult

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measure, because information is intangible and has no inherent value. He further adds information value can only be derived when information is applied to specific organizational processes. For instance, the value from a customer relationship management system can only be obtained when the system is implemented and relevant customer information is revealed from the system for organizational use. As Powell (1992) says that Information Economics make a distinction between the business domain and the technology domain in regard to non-financial impacts and risks. While the technology domain provides business domain with the IT opportunities, business domain focuses on optimal deployment of IT and pays the technology domain for use of resources (Berghout & Renkema, 2001).

ii. Balance Scorecard
The balance scorecard (BSC) developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) is a performance management system that enables businesses to drive strategies based on measurement and follow-up (Berghout & Renkema, 2001; Grembergen & Saull, 2001). Dykman (2003) states that BSC is a sophisticated management framework that translates strategy and vision into operational tactics. Fundamental idea behind this method is that evaluation of an investment should not be restricted to financial evaluation but should be supplemented with measures concerning customer satisfaction, internal processes as well. Purciafelli et al. (1999, as cited by Grembergen & Saull, 2001) predict that “by 2003, 60 percent of large enterprises and 30 percent of midsize enterprises will adopt a balanced set of metrics to guide business-oriented IT decisions”. Balance scorecards can be implemented enterprise-wide as well a project-wide, but this complex method requires total organizational support to be successful.

iii. IT assessment
Zee and Koot (1989, as cited by Berghout & Renkema, 2001) illustrate IT assessment method that is developed by consulting firm Nolan Norton. This method is designed for the evaluation of information technology effectiveness from a strategic point of view. Method zeroes in on the analysis of financial and nonfinancial ratios and these ratios are subsequently compared with benchmarks. The ratios are also used for a historical analysis of the organization and its use of IT.

How Do Hotels Measure IT Investments?
Watkins (2000) discusses the findings of a recent study about as to if hotels evaluate their IT investments, how they carry out the assessment, and what measurement tools they use. The study reveals that while overall lodging industry spending on computer-based technology is on the rise, many firms do not have adequate oversight procedures to monitor the effectiveness of their tech spending. This alleged study is called Hospitality 2000 and was conducted by Arthur Andersen along with New York University’s Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Travel Administration and the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals Association (HFTP). The study found that IT investments in the hotel industry are mostly made based on the formal annual IT budget processes.

That study found out that during the previous three years, hotel companies spent an average of 3.1 percent of revenues on technology investments. However, once this capital is invested in IT, it is forgotten says Watkins. Unfortunately, lacking the corporate culture most mid-size hotel companies do not intend to measure the IT investments they carried out. The aforementioned study revealed that an alarming of 61 percent of companies have no formal procedures to measure the technology investment performance. That is certainly alerting that something is missed in hotel industry. Regarding the dollars invested, companies should be more concerned with the performance evaluation of the IT projects they invested in.

All of the financial methods described in previous sections apply to the evaluation of hotel IT investment projects as well, and there is more too. Hospitality 2000 study revealed following IT measurement tools: cost reduction (used by 77 percent of respondents), employee productivity (73 percent), revenue enhancement (44 percent), return on investment (50 percent), payback period (41 percent), and internal rate of return (32 percent).

Looking at the methods hotels use to measure their IT investments, it is easily observed that cost reduction and employee productivity far exceed the other measurement methods. In shorter and simpler terms, hoteliers are more concerned with the fact that how a newer technology would help them cut the cost of production. If a newly introduced technology or an already acquired one proposes to reduce the cost significantly, that technology is admitted profitable and beneficial for longer terms. Regarding the very low profit margins in the hotel industry,
hoteliers’ strong interest in cost reduction and using it as a measurement method towards the evaluation of new technologies is understandable. Employee productivity on other hand seem not to have a direct impact on the evaluation of new technologies, however, in fact, it may be a good method to assess the value of a new technology. Reducing the number of errors of employees and enabling them perform their jobs better, new technologies help to increase operational efficiency. Therefore, in return, in a hotel environment where success is essentially dependent on how well employees do their jobs, these technologies help increase customer satisfaction by improving employee productivity. Thus, to the extent a new technology enables employees perform better as compared to without that technology, it could be favored or not. As the third most used IT measurement technique in the hotel industry, revenue enhancement stands as an important measurement tool. A manager/executive absolutely wants to financially benefit from a new IT investment, so incremental revenue increase generated from the deployment of a specific technology is significant in assessing the value of this technology.

When looking at the last used IT investments methods, internal rate of return and payback period stand in this category which seem to be more financial methods in assessing the value of IT investments. These two methods along with the NPV method are dominantly used in the manufacturing industries where heavy and high-tech equipments are implemented by allocating enormous resources. However, in the hotel industry where human involvement surpasses the machine involvement, financial expertise and corporate culture is not well structured, use of these investment methods is overlooked.

Conclusion

According to Hospitality 2000 study, above mentioned results reveal that hotels largely make their IT investments based on the formal annual IT budgeting processes; great majority of them do not measure IT investments they made but plan to measure in the future; and the mostly used IT investment measurement methods are cost reduction and employee productivity that are likely to keep their position in the future as well.

In the very beginning of the paper, we briefly discussed that hotel industry lags behind other industries in following new technologies and implementing them. However, later as the information became so valuable and technology made it easy to get the information as well as facilitating the operational activities, people in this industry came to the realization that they could not make it without the technology and it was there ready for them. They just needed to find the correct technology for their organizations and implement them with complete care. By realizing the benefits, they did this and took the advantage of these technologies. What matters now is that they now ignore to analyze if the technologies they are considering to acquire would benefit them or not, yet they solely rely on the intuition and good feeling. Keeping in mind that resources are scarce and valuable, investment dollars should be spent on the IT initiatives that are promising to return financial and operational benefits, otherwise they are lost forever. That is why measuring the value of IT investments to the company that is considering deploying them or already deployed them is important to see how it can help or helped so far. The results of this IT assessment effort could be indicator of the future success of IT investment, how companies should change the investment or redesign the investment. On top of everything comes the financial return for the hotel that is undertaking an IT initiative. Therefore, IT investment has to return increased revenues to be considered as financially beneficial.

Further Research and Possible Research Methodologies

This paper so far introduced and discussed importance of IT utilization in business, methods of IT evaluations and eventually showed the findings of a former study that has investigated how hotels measure IT investments. From this point, a primary data collection is assumed to be helpful in an attempt to further analyze and add to the body of knowledge as to how hotels measure their IT investments. To conduct the study, researcher believes that there could be two methods to collect the necessary data:

i. A questionnaire attempting to find out the mainstream IT measurement methods in the hotel industry should be developed and sent out to a number of randomly selected hotel companies via electronic mail (e-mail).

ii. A focus group discussion with IT Executives/Managers and/or Finance Executives/Managers of hotel companies should be conducted. This group discussion could be realized during one of major industry conferences or exhibitions such as HITEC, New York Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Show or HFTP annual conference.

Once the first-hand data from one of these methods is collected it can be way better revealed that what methods hotels most recently use to analyze and measure their IT investments.

References


Apostolopoulos, T. K. & (continued on Page 14)


Health and Fitness: How Does it Affect Hotel Choice
by Emily C. Goretsky and David A. Cranage

Introduction

The hospitality industry continues to grow with our changing society and modern trends. Newspapers have highlighted recent developments of the obesity epidemic throughout our nation. Health and fitness trends such as lavish gyms, special diets, and concern for nutrition, have heightened senses in the public's mind. Most recently health and fitness has become a growing concern to travelers. The hotel industry is trying to make accommodations for this public to satisfy their needs. Hotel companies seem to feel that by improving their fitness facilities or changing their cuisine, guests will become more attracted, or to remain loyal to the property. The goal of this study is to find out how important these aspects of fitness are to the consumer when choosing a hotel.

This research study looks into the health and fitness trend to determine within age groups, geographical location, and diverse travelers, who are the people that are willing to spend the extra dollar for hotels that are aware of, and provide for, their fitness needs. The survey that was created allows for comparisons to be created and discovery of what is most important to today's travelers when considering the wide variety of choices available when selecting a hotel.

Many Americans are aware of the rise of our country's obesity epidemic. According to the Association of Operating Room Nurses, industrial growth and technological advances have provided an abundance of food, especially high-calorie, fast food (Shortt, pg. 1069-1078). Simultaneously, decreased physical activity has resulted in an increasing number of people who are overweight and obese. There are several problems connected with obesity including premature death, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, and some forms of cancer. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute says the most successful weight-loss strategies include calorie reduction combined with physical activity and the addition of a possible “behavior-modification therapy” designed to improve eating and exercise habits (Shortt, pg. 1069-1078).

People across the country are trying to battle this reputation by trying new diet fads such as “The Atkins Revolution” focusing on a low-carbohydrate food sources. Other diets such as Weight Watchers, South Beach Diet, The Zone, and Slim Fast are now being incorporated into many hotel and restaurants menus. According to USA Today, Starwood Hotels & Resorts may add a special “diet corner” to menus printed in their restaurants offering higher protein/lower carbohydrate meals. Additionally, Loews Hotels Chain identify high-protein/lower-carbohydrate meals with a special insignia on restaurant and room service menus at all 15 of its hotels as of April, 2005 (Khan, pg. B6). Loews has overhauled their menu to include about 50 dishes that will have different dietary restriction needs met. Many chain restaurants, as well, have begun to change the dynamics of their menus.

Darden’s Red Lobster will begin including nutritional information for many of their entrées including “Light House Selections”. At Ruby Tuesday’s a “smart eating guide” will now be placed at each table informing the guests of healthy eating, low-fat, low-calorie, or low-carbohydrate items. Applebee’s has now formed alliances with Weight Watchers, not only for adults but for light children’s meals as well (Meitner, pg. 1)

As well as making attempts to eat healthier, the American public has also become increasingly interested in fitness and exercise. The International Health, Racquet & Sportclub Association (IHRSA) claims the total number of commercial health clubs, fitness centers and gyms in the country increased to

(continued on Page 16)
The purpose of this research was to determine the importance of health and fitness to a consumer when selecting a hotel, and to identify the willingness of different travel groups to pay more for health and fitness as well as to actively seek these options. Additionally, this study will identify consumer wellness needs and involvement when traveling. Finally, it will focus on the groups that could be the target market for the health and fitness trend.

The surveys were handed out in Chicago Midway Airport at several different gates. The airport offered a large and random sample of various travelers, cultures, and age groups. The first person on the left and right side of the first row at each gate were asked if they would be willing to fill out a five-minute survey. Fifty-four surveys were returned.

Since many people are reluctant to give their age, the survey begins by asking the year of graduation to get an age grouping estimate for the respondent. Following this, the geographic home of the respondent was asked for, which was later divided into suburb or city, as well as divided based on region in the United States such as Mid West, West, South, Southwest, New England, East, and Mid Atlantic. Thirty-five states were represented in this survey and three foreign countries. The participant was then asked to rank from 1-6, the importance level of several aspects when selecting a lodging facility. These aspects included importance of location, dining facility and room service, price, fitness facilities and in-room equipment, loyalty to a certain hotel or company, and the reward systems offered.

The next question asked participants to reveal their reasons for traveling, as a percentage. The percentages could be split between traveling for business, pleasure, visit family/friends, and wellness, and needed to total 100%.

The following question asked participants how often they used a gym or participated in physical activity per week from, nearly never to almost every day of the week. Several questions were then asked using scale of 1 to 7, 1 being the lowest ranking, 7 being the highest. This set of questions asked participants if they considered themselves to be health conscious, if they had previously used the fitness facilities when traveling or staying at a hotel, if they were willing to pay more for a hotel that included fitness facilities, if they were interested in paying more for in-room fitness options, if the guest would look for places that included low carb/low fat dining facilities, and if they actively sought out lodging properties that offered fitness facilities and healthy dining. Their interests were determined further by asking two questions, how important was a hotel with large fitness facilities and varied equipment as opposed to the importance of a hotel with just the fitness basics. The survey then asked how much the respondent liked to try to stay and healthy and fit when on vacation or staying in a hotel. Finally, participants were asked how much they would like to try, or are interested in, going to a health and wellness resort.

Results

Demographically, the largest percent of the respondents (51.97%), were from a suburb or rural area. According to Wikipedia.com, suburbs are districts located either on the outer rim of a city or outside the official limits of a city. Rural areas are places with low populations and are often influenced by agriculture, mining, petroleum, or natural gas. These areas are usually located away from the larger cities. Cities, which represented 42.6% of the respondents, is seen as an urban area that is differentiated by its’ size, population density, importance, or legal...
status. A city usually consists of residential, industrial and business areas together with administrative functions which may relate to a wider geographical area. These definitions were used when dividing the two groups. Additionally 5.6% of respondents were classified as “other” (outside U.S.A. or unspecified on the survey).

Of the fifty four participants surveyed, the mean age was 36.53 with a standard deviation of 14.21. The participants were then placed into age groups with age group 4 (30 to 48 yrs) having the largest number of participants.

- 1 = Under 18 - young persons (usually with low income)
- 2 = 18 - 23 - college aged students
- 3 = 24 - 29 - young professionals (usually with high disposable income)
- 4 = 30 - 48 - adults (often with families)
- 5 = 49 - 63 - adults (often with children in college)
- 6 = Over 64 - retirees

For the sample, the main reason for travel selected was business (39.1%). Following that was leisure travel (34.4%) and then travel related to family (26.6%). Sixteen percent of U.S. trips of more than 50 miles from home are for business, according to a new report on National Household Travel Survey (NHTS). These aspects may affect some of these results of the survey since business travelers often have travel accounts allocated to them by their companies. This money may decrease the importance of price as a factor and as well allow the traveler to pick a hotel more specific to their health and fitness needs.

Location was selected as the most important aspect of selecting a hotel (67.9%), more than the combined total of all the other responses. In several articles, when Conrad Hilton was asked to define the three most important factors for the success of a hotel, he is reported to have answered, “Location, location and location!” Throughout the years this has not changed as guests would still prefer to stay close to where they need to be. Next, pricing is considered to be the most important factor (13.2%), see Figure 1.

Approximately 11% of the respondents combined will take into consideration hotel brand/loyalty and the rewards systems these companies have set up for their guests. Today, almost every major hotel company has some sort of reward structure set up.

A correlation analysis was run on the factors of importance. The results demonstrate that people differed in their opinion of what was important based on what was most meaningful. This can be seen for example in that location was negatively correlated, with the concern for dining facilities. Thus as location became more important, the guest’s concern for dining facilities was slowly diminished. The importance of price was positively correlated with location, so as concern about location increased, the concern about price also increased. This can probably be explained by looking at vacation travelers who have a concern for being near where they want to go while keeping their trip cost efficient. Location was negatively correlated with that of loyalty for a hotel and the rewards programs. People who tend to stay with one hotel company may sacrifice location of the hotel to continue their lodging experience with their preferred hotel company. In contrast, people who prefer location may not care about the hotel company or its’ rewards offerings.

Price was negatively correlated with the choice of fitness. This shows that to people who care about staying a hotel with health and fitness options, the concern for price is less. This may be true of business travelers who would rather have their extra amenities as oppose to worrying over the price of the hotel. In contrast, families or vacation travelers, may have no concern for the fitness options but make price a deciding factor. This also occurs again with the reward programs and loyalty to the company. When price is a

Figure 1: Most Important Aspects of Selecting a Hotel

![Figure 1: Most Important Aspects of Selecting a Hotel](image)

(continued on Page 18)
concern the loyalty is put aside. Loyalty is positively correlated to the guest rewards programs. This is because most guests’ who are loyal to a company will eventually become part of one the reward systems.

People from cities were positively correlated with the importance of health and fitness amenities. Those from the suburbs were negatively correlated. This shows that residents of a city may be more apt to look for fitness options when staying in hotels. A study by the RAND Corporation found that people were more health conscious in places like Chicago, Boston and San Francisco — possibly because they were more likely to walk to work and use public transportation (Hartocollis, pg. 14CN.1).

The participants did not seem to strongly consider themselves health conscious with a mean of 3.4, which was below the midpoint of the participants, see Figure 2. About twenty percent of participants were striving for a health conscious lifestyle (rating of 6 or 7). Those who were health conscious also agreed more strongly to using fitness facilities within hotels on trips. This segment is the grouping of people who are also willing to pay more for a hotel when they have a concern for staying healthy and fit during a vacation. These customers also looked for low calorie and low fat options when traveling. The travelers who did say they were concerned about their personal health and fitness were the ones to strongly correlate with actively seeking this out when selecting a hotel. Not surprisingly,

Figure 2: Percent of Participants Considering Themselves Health Conscious

![Histogram of Considered health conscious](image)

preferences for fitness basics and a large gym were both positively correlated with those who were health conscious. These participants were more in favor of hotels with a large fitness facility as oppose to those just with the fitness basics. These respondents also were very strongly in favor of staying healthy and fit during their travels and would be interested in taking trips to wellness resorts. Those who considered themselves health conscious seem to carry that over to their travels. These people do not abandon their fitness regimes once they are on vacation or a business trip.

Most people said that they went to the gym or participated in physical activity several days of the week. Forty percent said that they are people who like to work out. However, only 37% indicated that they participate in physical activity going to the gym once or less a week. On the positive side, this means that 63% of the respondents are participating in physical activity more then once a week. Although these people responded highly to using the gym in their everyday life, in general these people were negatively correlated to willingness to pay more for a hotel with a fitness facility.

The research also found that as age for the participants went up, the gym usage declined. Obesity and high blood pressure are two of the chief health problems plaguing Americans ages 55-64, according to the latest federal health snapshot. Two of every five Americans in that age group are obese (“Obesity, hypertension serious problem among Americans”, 14). The older generation may also not have caught up to the new and rising health trends. Advertising for many of today’s most popular gyms focuses on the young and the fit. People who previously used fitness facilities with the hotels seemed very willing to continue use of the fitness facilities and even pay more for them when traveling. After using hotel gyms and realizing how easy they are and becoming comfortable with them, guests may continue to require the fitness aspect for their travels. These guests were also interested in paying more for an in-room fitness option, but not as highly as they were willing to pay for hotels with gyms. Those with previous experience with hotel heath and fitness centers would actively seek them.
out and wanted both the fitness basics and hotels with large facilities. They also highly rated wanting to stay healthy and fit when on vacation. These guests who had previous experiences would like to continue their lodging experiences within hotels that included any health and fitness amenities and were somewhat interested in traveling to wellness resorts.

Not surprisingly, the people who were willing to pay more for fitness facilities were also the same people who were willing to pay more for in room fitness options. These guests also were much more interested in a property with a large gym then just the fitness basics. It seems that they are willing to spend that extra dollar but they also want more for their dollar.

Age also effected the decision of guests’ willingness to pay more for hotel fitness facilities. Age grouping 4, 30 - 48 years old, were the most willing to pay more for hotel fitness facilities. Group 2 (18 to 23 years old) had less participants yet also had a strong showing of support for fitness facilities. Young professionals, group 3 (24 to 29 years), also seem to show increasing interests for hotel fitness programs. Those who actively seek fitness facilities and consider themselves healthy and fit are more inclined to pay more for in-room fitness options, but are more likely pay extra for a hotel with a gym.

Hotels stand by their in-room fitness options by claiming that it is a fairly inexpensive way to distinguish themselves from several other companies. “This is just another way that hotels are setting themselves apart from one another,” said David Murff, the director of information services for PKF Hospitality Research (Elliott, 5-6). Hotels are expanding their fitness offerings beyond their workout rooms, offering room-service delivery of fitness equipment, exercise manuals, workout DVD’s and, in some cases, they’ll send a personal trainer to your room.

At Marriott and Renaissance hotels in North America, travelers can request a BodyWedge 21 foam exercise device that promises a full-body workout (the 21 exercises in the program are printed directly on the wedge for your convenience). Or they can exercise with a BodyRev, a hand-held exercise device that offers a strength-training workout that takes just 15 minutes (Elliott, 5-6). A DVD on the in-room entertainment system shows you how to use these devices.

Companies say that these in-room fitness options have been very highly received by their guests. This study, however, shows that people may like it a lot but there is still only a very small percentage of people who are willing to spend more money to stay at a hotel based on the availability of in-room fitness. The people who are willing to pay for in room fitness seem to be the ones who are athletically inclined, attend the gym frequently, and are interested in possibly experiencing a wellness resort in the future.

The average for those actively seeking fitness facilities was a 3.87. This shows most travelers are still not actively seeking health and fitness options in the lodging experiences or only feel moderately about it. Since it still a growing trend, this study shows that once guests try the fitness facilities they begin to like it more and seek it for their future travel plans. As of now, it is still only a small aspect of the things a guest will look for after location and price.

Implications and Conclusions

There seems to be potential for increased sales in the future with a continuation of growth in fitness travelers. Since Generation Y seems most interested in the availability of fitness facilities and healthy dining options, marketers may want to consider how they can attract these guests.

Increasing in popularity are the health and wellness resorts. The range of health retreats can be extensive. Some focus on weight-loss, others on the improvement of eating habits, and others on exercise, strength, or meditation.

“Hotels are expanding their fitness offerings beyond their workout rooms, offering room-service delivery of fitness equipment, exercise manuals, workout DVD’s and, in some cases, they’ll send a personal trainer to your room.”

Whatever the interest a health retreat could be developed. One example is the Miraval Resort in Arizona. According to their website “At Arizona’s desert resort, Miraval, each activity provides an opportunity to bring life more fully into balance.” Another example is the Canyon Ranch Resort in Massachusetts. This resort offer three- to seven-day packages, which includes a selection of 45 complimentary fitness classes daily and allowances for health and spa services with more than 225 options. As well, there are lectures, workshops and cooking demonstrations. Although this is an all exclusive resort, a single person for 3 nights may cost you $2,650.

With recent additions to several of the major hotel chains in progress, it is important for the hospitality industry to remember their main focus: service quality and the guest’s needs. Price and location still remain the most important aspects of today’s travelers. Business travel is still at an all time high, but increasingly vacationers and those visiting their families are a major portion of hospitality consumers. The survey used for this project helped obtain a broad
perspective from the view of the average guest.

There is a growing awareness of obesity in America and fitness club membership is continuously rising. The Westin has its workout rooms, Hyatt has personal trainers, and Marriott is adding gyms in practically every hotel. The younger travelers seem to take these things into consideration when deciding where they will stay on their next vacation. Those in the next age group who are slightly older, and more often business travelers, seem to find these facilities beneficial for the additional expense. Business travelers quite frequently have the consent of their companies to charge for that extra amenity.

Hotel companies that want to attract the fitness and health traveler, now and in the future, will need to key in on those who have the extra money and the willingness to spend it. Those people who do have this inclination are looking for hotels with large fitness centers more then they seem interested in a place with just the basics or the in room fitness equipment. However, the offering of in room fitness options has just recently begun and this option may become more popular in the future.

There are hotels completely dedicated to the health and fitness mission and certain people, especially Generation Y, seem to be interested in trying one in the future. As the awareness for health and nutrition continue to grow, the popularity of these “fit” vacations may also been on the rise. Hotels will begin seeing a larger profit from this market when they promote the fitness factor as a added benefit to the already positive attributes of location and price of the facility.

References


Introduction
This paper discusses the effects of terrorism and wars on the perceptions of the tourism industry of undergraduate tourism students in Antalya city, which is regarded as “The Capital City of Tourism in Turkey”. Testing of the impacts of these negative situations was from data collected from tourism management students, facilitated by using a questionnaire instrument incorporating an attitudinal scale.

Methodology
Research Sample
The data of the study were gathered from the undergraduate students of Akdeniz University, School of Tourism & Hotel Management undertaking a 4-year course curriculum. The school is located in Antalya and it has a continuous success among other tourism schools in Turkey. From the 1328 distributed questionnaires 689 were returned, thus resulting in a response rate of 51.88 percent. In part, this relatively high response rate was due to respondents' interest in the subject and limited range of questions. A summary of general information of the respondent group is given in Table-1 and Table-2 in the Analysis and Results section.

Measurement Instrument
In this study, a questionnaire form that incorporated questions to illicit basic characteristics and preferences of respondents by adopting a multi-item attitudinal scale from Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000) was used. The attitudinal scale is based on a five-point scale: 4 strongly agree (SA); 3 representing agree (A); 2 representing disagree (DA); 1 representing strongly disagree (SD) and 0 representing neutral (N). The type of the attitudinal scale is a kind of Likert type which is used widely in field studies (Karasar, 2000:141). “Neutral (have no opinion)” option was added to prevent forced choices and was not evaluated during the statistical analyses.

The answers given to the multi-scale questions were analyzed by using a reliability analysis method, and the coefficient of internal consistency of total scale reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was found 0.84, which indicates a strong homogeneity of items (Özdamar, 1995:500).

Analysis and Results
As it is shown in Table-1, both the lodging and travel management groups are similar in percent-ages with 49.9 and 50.1 respectively. There are no significant differences in the number of students between the classes. The small difference between the first two classes and last two classes were due to the unwillingness of older students of upper classes.

The question “Chose tourism and hotel management school willingly” was answered “yes” by 69.7 percent which indicates that they are studying in the right career path; and with a considerable 73.2 percent stating that they were well informed about their choice of studying tourism. This result may be an indicator of good career guidance given in the secondary schools.

Also, the question “Inten-

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Sample in Frequencies (n=689)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lodging Management</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Travel Management</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class 1</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class 2</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class 3</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class 4</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Female</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on Page 22)
Table 2: The Preferences of Respondents in Frequencies and Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences of Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Chose tourism and hotel management school willingly?</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Informed Choice of a tourism and hotel management school?</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preference rank order of the tourism and hotel management currently studying in</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Between 1 and 3</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 4 and over</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intention to work in the tourism industry in the first year of university education</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Would still prefer studying tourism if informed before taking university entrance exam?</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relatives in the tourism industry</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes, there is</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No, there is not</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finished vocational tourism and hotel management secondary school</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When thought about the wars happened nearby Turkey in 1990 and 2003, from being studying tourism I am;</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regretful</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not regretful</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Despite it is a most affected industry from the results of incidences such as war and terrorism I advise tourism profession to my friends</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strongly agree</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undecided</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strongly not agree</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Comparing the Total Attitude Scores by the Preferences (Mann Whitney-U)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference rank order of the tourism and hotel management currently studying in</th>
<th>Between 1 and 3</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann Whitney-U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 and over</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>307.63</td>
<td>3803.40</td>
<td>-2.844</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatives in the tourism industry</th>
<th>Yes, there is</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann Whitney-U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, there is not</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>315.56</td>
<td>4453.90</td>
<td>-4.793</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finished Vocational Tourism and Hotel Management Secondary School</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Mann Whitney-U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>341.41</td>
<td>40455.0</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes that there is a significant difference at 95% confidence level.
and “Undecided” with 29.3 percent, and 18.3 percent respectively.

Respondents who have relatives working in the tourism industry were 39.6 percent and the remainder was 60.4 percent. A considerable number of the respondents (77.8 percent) finished vocational tourism and hotel management secondary school, while 22.2 percent finished different schools without vocational background.

After controlling the total attitudinal scale using factor analysis, (results discussed in the methodology section), further analyses were made to compare the total attitude scores by the preferences of the respondents.

According to the results of Mann Whitney-U analyses (Table-3), there is no significant difference between the respondents who finished or did not finished vocational tourism and hotel management secondary school (p>0.05). But two other characteristics showed significant differences (p<0.05).

Preferring the tourism and hotel management school between their first three choices in university entrance exam, has a higher mean rank score than the others whose preference rank order were 4 and over. Mean of rank score of the respondents who have relatives in the tourism industry was found to be higher than others who have no relatives working in the tourism industry. These differences shown in Table-3 indicate that students who have a higher mean rank score have more willingness toward the tourism industry.

Similar positive belief can be derived from the results given in Table-4. All the positive answers (Yes, Not Regretful and Strongly Agree) given by the respondents are indicators of the high mean rank scores. Thus, these high scores are the indication that these are students who have an attraction to the tourism industry.

Taking into account the results given in Table-3 and Table-4 made final statistical analyses. The assumptions discussed in methodology section were tested using Pearson Chi Square method and the results were given in Table-5.

### Discussion

A very few researches have focused on the effects of negative situations on tourism students’ perceptions and future expectations of the industry. In order to understand the perceptions of undergraduate students for the tourism industry, it is important to analyze the formation and development of their expectations, and to understand the effects to post-school choice.

(continued on Page 24)
Table 5: Comparing the Decisions on Terrorism by the Preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Regretful</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Not regretful</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chosen tourism and hotel management school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi Square = 97.022, df = 4, P = 0.000, *P < 0.05*

| Decision                                      | Yes       | 61        | 12.1          | 166   |
|                                              | No        | 52        | 36.4          | 59    |
|                                              | Undecided | 7         | 17            | 25    |
|                                              | TOTAL     | 120       | 17.4          | 250   |

Pearson Chi Square = 78.499, df = 4, P = 0.000, *P < 0.05*

| Decision                                      | Yes       | 85        | 16.4          | 176   |
|                                              | No        | 83        | 14.7          | 198   |
|                                              | Undecided | 55        | 11.1          | 145   |
|                                              | TOTAL     | 120       | 17.4          | 250   |

Pearson Chi Square = 8.631, df = 2, P = 0.013, *P < 0.05*

| Decision                                      | Yes       | 20        | 5.5           | 113   |
|                                              | No        | 77        | 18.1          | 81    |
|                                              | Undecided | 23        | 18.3          | 56    |
|                                              | TOTAL     | 120       | 17.4          | 250   |

Pearson Chi Square = 4.474, df = 4, P = 0.013, *P < 0.05*

References


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Introduction

Globalization has extended the need for multi-national companies to relocate their staff and especially their management level employees abroad. More companies are sending people abroad than ever before ("Traveling More Light", 2006).

According to a recent study of international assignments by Mercer, a consultancy group, 38% of companies surveyed have increased the number of international transfers from headquarters in the last two years. Another 47% are still sending the same number abroad. In addition, 44% of all firms reported an increase in international transfers between places other than headquarters ("Traveling more light", 2006).

Intercultural competence and international understanding are widely regarded as abilities of growing importance for individuals and organizations during globalization. The demand for intercultural learning is soaring worldwide ("Seminar to boost intercultural exchange", 2006).

There is a great deal of literature written on Americans working abroad, for example, Americans working in Europe, China (MacLeod, 2005), Japan, and South America (Salken, 2006). However, there is little bibliography on Europeans expatriating to the United States. Researchers have written articles on where expatriates prefer to live (UPI, 2006), cuisine that caters to Europeans in America (Woodward, 2006), Europeans’ right to vote outside their country (Povoledo, 2006), a new breed of flexible expatriates that cost less to companies (Donkin, 2005) and a practical guide for English expatriating mostly in other European countries because of bad weather (Budworth, 2005) but little has been offered on practical advice for Europeans expatriating in the United States. My recent experience addresses this deficiency in the literature.

Last year, I worked as a consultant in the Human Resources Department of a large hotel casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, and as I am European and fluent in French, I was to manage the relocation of the top French culinary management team for two new high-end restaurants. I accepted gladly as it was a big challenge for me to help the French become culturally assimilated and prepare to go to work for an American company in the short period of two to three weeks. I was further motivated as I had experienced the same dislocation two years prior when I came to the United States as a graduate student with my family.

First days in the new country

What kind of practical advice should one pass to a European expatriate? The list of the things that one has to do when he/she relocates is long and there are many obstacles that are well hidden when one moves to a new country.

The first and most important “asset” that the newcomers have to acquire is their Social Security Number. Without the magic number, it is like the newcomer does not exist, an unidentified person, a phantom, in the United States. A good example of its importance is that when one holds a working visa, like J-1 or H1-B, in the United States one brings cash for his/her first expenses. The majority of American banks will not even open a savings account without a Social Security Number. For a bank to open a checking account and issue checks is out of the question without the magic number and for the newcomer to carry cash is unpractical and unsafe.

The challenge is that Social Security Number is only issued to the newcomer after two to three weeks after his/her arrival in the United States. In the meantime, without the Social Security Number, the expatriate cannot lease/buy a home or buy a car, two of the most important things one must do before beginning work. It gets even more complicated when the expatriate has dependents coming in the United States. Therefore, it is imperative to apply for the Social Security Number the same day he/she arrives in the United States in order to save valuable time.

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The second big challenge is how best to travel around town. For example, how can he/she get to the Social Security office to apply for the Social Security Number? The answer is that Social Security office is located at 314 N. Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89101. The office is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays. The office is closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The office is accessible by bus and trolley. The office is close to the Lloyd George U.S. Courthouse.

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(continued from Page 27)

SS number? In Europe, where the public transportation system is well-developed, that would not even pose a question. In many European countries, there is wide bus network, subway system, and tram. Furthermore, taxi fare is at least half the price as in the United States. Moreover, one can hail a cab literally from wherever he/she is as simply as waving a hand to a passing taxi. If you have the same destination as a first customer in the taxi, with no hesitation the taxi driver will accommodate both of you.

In Las Vegas, there are specifically-designated places you can catch a cab, like hotels, airports, or clubs. One can also call the taxi company and give specific directions for the pick up time and place. Coming from Europe to Las Vegas and being ignorant about how the local system works can cause lots of stress and frustration to Europeans.

As already mentioned, owning one’s own car is imperative in the United States. The first question is whether to buy a new car or a used car. Fortunately, in the United States when buying a used car one can ask for a report with all the past history of the car, e.g., previous owners and the accidents that the car was involved in. Certainly, if one has the financial resources, it is advisable to buy a brand new car because it will have better safety futures, better resell value and it will sell faster in case the newcomer has to leave the country.

The second question is how one will buy a car, by credit or cash? Coming from Europe buying a car with cash is the best solution, as one should not have to pay the extra interest for the car loan. But if the expatriate pays by cash and not by credit, he/she will not start building his/her credit record that is very important when living in the United States.

Car dealerships that sell European cars, i.e., Volkswagen or Audi, are more accommodating to Europeans. Since they are importing European cars, they are targeting the European market in the United States. According to my knowledge, in Las Vegas, European car importers are the only car dealers that will sell a car on credit for the limited visa duration.

All transactions from large to small, e.g., buying on the Internet, buying groceries, gas, are usually made by Americans with a credit card. Using “plastic money” is the main means of transaction in the United States as it started the last two decades being in Europe. To get a credit card from a bank one needs to establish credit history. The fastest and safest way for an expatriate to do it is to buy a car by credit. The newcomer must remember that it is imperative to keep the payments on time; otherwise, a delay will cause problems with his/her credit record.

Some newcomers believe that the more credit card applications they make, the better are their chances to acquire one. This is a fallacy as each denied application or even multiple credit card applications can result in a negative report.

One cannot drive a car without buying car insurance. When negotiating with the car dealership, the newcomer should ask for at least the first one or two months of insurance to be included in the final price. This way the newcomer will have time to research the market for the best insurance deals. A European or international driver’s license may trigger very high car insurance fees. Therefore, it is advisable for the newcomer to secure an American driver’s license from the State of residence. Even the driver’s license exams require a Social Security Number! In many states, the Social Security Number is the driver’s license number.

Renting a house or an apartment rather than buying it might be a better choice. The time frame is very narrow to make a sound decision about investing a large purchase price. Furthermore, the purchase of a home generally requires a mortgage from an American bank. Almost no bank will give the newcomer a loan on good terms, if he/she doesn’t have credit history in the United States. Having a good credit history in your home country is useless for taking a mortgage in the United States. Thus, it might be better to lease a condo, apartment or house. This choice will depend on one’s personal preference and financial situation.

A recommendation is to find trusted real estate agents and give them specifications like what kind of property (house, apartment, condominum), the maximum monthly rental the renter can pay, the zoning for schools (if there are children), the preferred location, the size, furnished or not, with a swimming pool or/and garden, in a gated community or not. The more one is open in his/her preferences, the faster and easier he/she will move into his new place.

For the newcomers that come with young children, it is imperative to know that if they choose to put their offspring in a public school, they should first find the school of their preference, and then look for a place to live within this area. The same does not apply for private schools, which generally do not require that students live in a particular area.

Differences in the workplace culture

After the French managers settled successfully into their new offsite life, they were ready to take on their responsibilities. The French were employed as the top and middle management of the restaurants. Since Americans were recruited as line employees and in some positions in the middle management, the French would have to be prepared to communicate effectively with their American counterparts and subordinates.

There were obvious cultural differences between the French and the American way of thinking, doing, and expressing feelings. Those differences were even more magnified under the stress and the pressure before the opening of the two new restaurants.

For the French, physical contact, hugging and kissing when greeting one another is normal. For the Americans, physical contact when greeting is regarded as highly personalized and to be avoided among professional contacts who are not also personal friends. The French had to adjust to the American greeting rituals if they didn’t want to face litigation for sexual harassment, or for discrimina-
tion in the case they were greeting differently an American or French subordinate.

Meetings are set differently. Americans like to be direct and get to the point. They have little patience for long-winded explanations. For them time is money (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). They have an agenda and a specified time for the meeting. Rescheduling or canceling a meeting is perceived as excusable only in extreme circumstances. Promises to meet deadlines and appointments are taken very seriously (Hall, 1990). On the other hand, Latin Europeans, French, Spanish, Italians or Greeks may regularly be late to business meetings and have more interruptions from phone calls and visitors. Moreover, they might have several discussions going on at the same time (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003).

The concept of the introductory period, where the supervisor is required to evaluate the performance of his/her staff during the first 90 days of employment, was something new to the French team. They had never done a performance appraisal before as evaluating in France is like an unwelcome personal commentary, criticizing not only one’s work but also one’s own being (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003).

Personnel actions in corporate America must be documented because of liability issues. The best way to illustrate what companies face in terms of litigation in the United States are the shocking statistics that show that in the United States there are 279 lawyers per 100,000 people, whereas in France there are only 29 per 100,000 people. United States has more than nine times the lawyers of France (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). Therefore, the company had to educate the French team on how to document attendance violations, misconduct, and performance assessments.

American corporations have strict policies and procedures. An example is the anti-discrimination practices, i.e., no ethnic and sex jokes are allowed in the workplace. For the French and for many Europeans, this type of verbiage and behavior is very common. However, what can be perceived as normal in one’s country can be forbidden in another.

Background tests and drug tests are obligatory in the American hospitality industry before hiring and during employment under special circumstances. Hospitality is a people business. Hotels, casinos, and restaurants deal with guests and guests’ safety must be their main priority.

The United States is a culturally diversified country with cultural heterogeneity. European countries struggle with cultural diversity for several reasons: high rates of unemployment, fear of terrorism and maintenance of their ethnic and cultural homogeneity (Rowntree, Lewis, Price & Wyckoff, 2006). Therefore, Europeans are not used in working with so many different cultures. For the French team to work with Hispanics, African Americans, and Caucasians was a big challenge and the company had to educate them about the workplace meaning of those differences.

In France, the sole and indisputable person responsible for the front and back of the house is the Chef. In the United States, the responsible for the back of the house is the Chef and for the front of the house is the General Manager. It took a while for the French to understand that the Chef must not interfere with the responsibilities of the front of the house and that he must work in harmony with the general manager for a common task, the success of the restaurant.

Need for Educating on Cultural Differences

The inability of global managers to adapt to the host culture is the number one reason that corporate expatriates transferred overseas from the United States do not perform adequately. Twenty-five percent repatriate earlier than expected with a cost of 2.5 billion dollars annually (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003).

What are some steps that corporations can take to close the gap created by cultural differences? The first step is to educate the expatriates on how people in the host country think and act differently than they do in their homeland. Acknowledging the existence of cultural differences is the first step towards starting to understand them. The company must provide expatriates with cross-cultural and diversity training that will focus on characteristics such as openness, patience, respect for the beliefs of others, flexibility and a sense of humor. Typically, intercultural training programs last for three days and include cultural simulation games, role plays, and lectures from trainers who have hands-on international experiences with both the same cultural background as the attendees, and the cultural background of the host country (Shumsky, 1992).

The more someone travels, the more open-minded one is in adapting to change. However, one must not forget the undisputable existence of the four stages of cultural shock (honeymoon, crises, adjustment, adaptation) that the expatriate will experience. Cultural shock derives from both the challenge of new cultural surroundings and from the loss of a familiar cultural environment (Rhinesmith, 1985). It is imperative for the company to facilitate the transition of the newcomer to the company’s culture climate. Then expatriates will start trusting and relying on their employer for a strong and long term working relationship.

References


Have you ever complained that you cannot find a common time to meet with your group members? Is this why you do not like group projects? Group projects seem to be common in hospitality courses. It is very useful learning tool as vast majority of companies use groups to work together on a common project. For this reason, project management skills become very important in addition to all other people and operational skills that a hospitality graduate should possess. The question remains that how you can work with group members who have very diverse and complicated schedules. Do you have to meet at 11pm on Sunday nights because this is the only time where everybody in the group can meet?

In today’s business world, some of the workers have never met with their group members or project team members yet they can produce effective and on-time projects. Companies like IBM, Intel, and Microsoft have been using groups for decades and majority of these group members never meet each other in physical space (Dvorak, 2007). Hospitality companies such as Marriott International, Wyndham Hotel Group (formerly Cendant Corporation), and Orbitz.com use groups to work on a common project.

For hospitality students, groups can be a challenging task. Some common problems within groups include:

- Work assignment cannot be done easily
- Roles and responsibilities are not handled properly in the beginning of the project
- One or more group members do not do their portion of the task
- Lack of rules
- Lack of communication

Probably the last problem, lack of communication, is the most important problem that creates other problems. Technology can certainly help with communication. Email is a very common tool to provide communication among the group members. However, if a group consists of 4 or more people, then, the amount of email that is exchanged among the group can be overwhelming and difficult to keep up. One possible way of centralizing the communication is through Wikis.

What is a Wiki?

As defined by the most famous Wiki site, Wikipedia, Wiki is “a medium which can be edited by anyone with access to it, and provides an easy method for linking from one page to another.” (Wikipedia, 2007). Wiki wiki means “rapidly” in Hawaiian Language. Wikis are very easy to use by multiple people. It can be open to public, meaning that anybody can alter the content in the case of Wikipedia, World’s largest encyclopedia. However, this brings the credibility, privacy, and security issues. Recent Wiki tools enable users to make it a private Wiki, allowing only group members to access and alter the content. One of these tools is pbWiki.com (See Figure 1). Once setup which takes only a minute, the users can create pages which can be edited by any group member. The different versions of pages are kept in the history to allow group members to see who did what. With pbwiki.com, users can insert links (i.e. to create a link library for a project), images, and video.

Figure 1: pbwiki.com is a free tool for students

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How to use Wiki in a Group Project

Let’s assume that a professor assigned a marketing feasibility project for a group of 5 students. One of the students can go to pbwiki.com or other Wiki websites to create a Wiki for the group. The student can choose it to be a private Wiki, not allowing other people to see what the group does inside the Wiki. The student who created the Wiki will email the password to other group members. The first task in any group project is to have a common understanding of the project. One group member can create a page called “Project Goals.” This page can be edited by other group members until all agree.

The second step is to clarify roles and responsibilities. Another page in Wiki called “Roles and Responsibilities” can be created. Each group member can list the roles and tasks to be done. If they adopt one of these tasks, they can put their name besides it. When they are finished with the task, they come back to “Roles and Responsibilities” page and put “Done” besides their name and upload the outcome document into “Documents” folder. Each group member can check each other’s work and edit it. Within the Wiki, group members can do more than just online collaboration. Figure 2 shows some of the tools that Wiki members can use. For example, Wiki users can install a calendar, create a spreadsheet, install a chat tool where group members can chat synchronously via text or voice, and insert user video or Youtube.com video.

The hospitality management students at the University of Delaware use Wikis very successfully in managing a hospitality system design project. Each group has 5 members and through Wiki, they can collaborate easily.

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