

USING TripAdvisor REVIEWS AS TOOLS TO MANAGE REPUTATION BY ACTING ON THE 7P'S OF SERVICE MARKETING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract

The central goal of this paper is to provide a theoretical and practical contribution to the existing literature in the fields of brand reputation and responses from TripAdvisor (TA) reviews. In addition, I'm attempting to better understand the influence of online notices on consumer decision-making and management response in order to improve 7P's of service marketing. The literature review covers the interconnection between brand reputation and consumer choice and theoretically examines consumers' decision-making in an online context. To address this issue, a mixed method approach is used by combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Empirical data are collected through in-depth interview with the SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel's CEO. Subsequently, the quantitative data are collected by observing the data on TA using R software. The author concludes that negative comments make it possible to better respond to the dissatisfaction of the consumers by using the 7P Service Marketing Mix and by the opportunity to improve the proposed offer. Managerial implications and suggestions for further research will also be provided.

Keywords: Brand reputation, consumer behaviour, consumer-to-consumer (C2C), Service marketing, TripAdvisor, the 7P's Service Marketing Mix

INTRODUCTION

As social media are used before, during and after holidays for experience sharing and are significant information source (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), online customer reviews have become an increasingly important factor in brand communications. This is based on the assumption that especially consumer-to-consumer (C2C) marketing is a key factor influencing purchase

decisions of holiday destinations (Ben Youssef et al, 2015). Web 2.0 is seen as having a major effect on how individuals create, exchange, and use information (O'Connor, 2010; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). TripAdvisor (TA) is one of the most prominent sites that consumers use to get an insight into a hotel (TripBarometer, Travel Trends 2016). The reviews provide insights and can make or break a business.

Travellers rely on the millions of reviews and opinions on TA to help them feel confident in their decisions when planning and booking travel. According to Oxford Economics, “TA content influenced 13% of international trips and almost 8 % of all domestic travel worldwide in 2014. This translates to over 350 million trips and 1.8 billion tourism nights in 2014 alone. The TA Popularity Index is becoming a critical measure for many hotels. Based on traveller feedback, a property’s ranking on the Popularity Index reflects how it compares to other hotels within a geographic area. Hotels that are closer to the top of the list are more likely to be seen when prospective guests search for hotels in the area”.

In order to address this issue, the paper focuses on the SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel, located in Djerba Island (Tunisia) which has integrated its traditional marketing strategy in a new approach based on the 7Ps framework for the service marketing mix and the concept of brand reputation with the support of tourist’s TA comments. The following research questions are therefore being addressed:

- *RQ1: What marketing strategy do hotel use to attract and retain clients?*
- *RQ2: What factors are highest and lowest considered by clients in terms of marketing services?*
- *RQ3: Why do hotel manage brand reputation?*
- *RQ4: Why are hotel reviews important and how do they respond to strengthen their marketing approaches to attract and retain tourists?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Service Marketing Mix

Coined by McCarty (1960), the marketing mix is a familiar marketing strategy tool that was traditionally limited to the core 4Ps of Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The 4Ps were designed at a time where businesses sold products, rather than services and the role of customer service in helping brand development was not so well known. Over time, Bitner and Booms (1981) added three extended ‘service mix P’s’: People, Physical evidence, and Processes. Today, it is recommended that the full 7Ps of the marketing mix are considered when reviewing competitive strategies and in order to help companies to review and define key

issues that affect the marketing of its products and services and has the objective to create value for brand and for consumers (Morrison, 1989; Lovelock, 2001).

In this research, the 7P's are considered as tourism marketing mix elements which are discussed below and modelled in Figure 1.

Product (P1): Kotler and Armstrong (2009) defined a product / service as anything that can be used to attract attention, acquisition, use or consumption to satisfy a want or a need. Product is an important element of the marketing mix and must be properly conceived and managed to meet the needs of the consumers and achieve organizational goals. Products and services from the hotel industry are designed to meet the needs and expectations of both business and leisure travellers. The hotel offer, among other things, consists of products and services such as accommodation, which represents the types of accommodation offered to the guest and the food and beverages offered to travellers. There are also professional services such as meetings and conferences, as well as correlated products (meeting rooms, buffets, etc.), and various leisure activities (Bowie & Buttle, 2004).

Price (P2): Hotels are required to make various decisions concerning the fixing of prices. These choices relate in particular to the price of accommodation and the various packages offered, the development of special promotions, and the pricing of catering and leisure facilities (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). Hotels with different services and products to offer have several pricing strategies in place. In particular, they help to cope with seasonal fluctuations and are essential to the profitability of the company. These different rates also allow the establishment to forge its image with the clientele but also stakeholders (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). Price is indeed an indicator of quality and level and will therefore allow customers to evaluate the value of the service or product proposed (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995).

Promotion (P3): Promotion is the part of the marketing mix, which uses marketing communication methods to sell products and services to targeted consumers. The promotion, also known as marketing communication, encompasses the tools that enable the hotel to communicate externally with customers and internally with employees and stakeholders. Many elements are included in the promotion. Examples include brand identity, advertising material such as brochures, and advertisements in various media. Promotional services include direct mail, public relations, sponsorship and the website (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). To have an impact on tourists' image of destinations, a mix of techniques are used like old media (e.g. printed material), new media like the Internet with social media as well as different events to mention just a few of the available possibilities (Pike, 2008; McCabe, 2009).

Place (P4): According to Palmer (2011) 'Place decisions refer to the ease of access which potential customers have to a service. Place decisions can therefore involve physical

location decisions, choice of which intermediaries to use in making a service accessible to customers and non-locational decisions which are used to make services available.' In the hospitality industry, this component of the marketing mix consists of two distinct components: the location of the establishment and the distribution channels (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). The location refers to where the hotel is located, and is the first decision made by a hotel, as well as the most important one. The decision to choose the location with the greatest potential is made with the view to attracting customers (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). The distribution, for its part, concerns the way in which the establishment makes the booking possible for a potential customer, directly through its reservation services, or through intermediaries, such as travel agencies and tour operators. The evolution of communications technologies, particularly the Internet, has led to a significant change in the relationship between hotel establishments and intermediary agents (Bowie & Buttle, 2004).

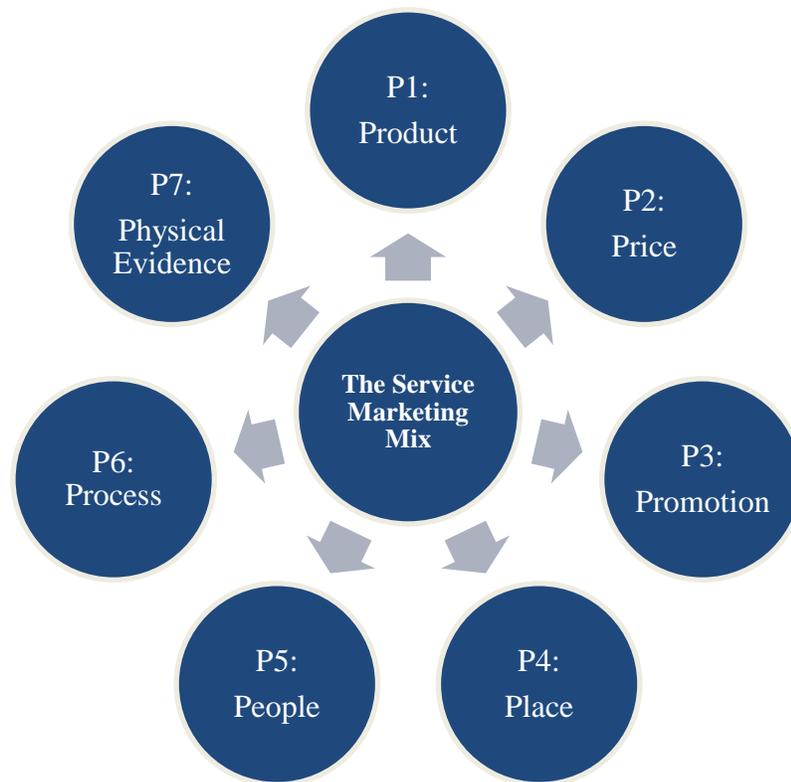
People (P5): For most services, people are a vital element of the marketing mix (Palmer, 2001, cited in Baker, 2003, pp. 603). The people part of the marketing mix relates to all stakeholders involved in the product or service during its lifecycle. Individuals (or participants) designate both clients and employees. Hotel customers interact with one another, so the compatibility of target markets is important for customer satisfaction (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). Moreover, the majority of the services offered in a hotel establishment require strong contact with the customer, which combined with the simultaneous production and consumption of the service, means that staff occupy a key position in the influence of Consumer perception of quality of service (Parasuraman et. al, 1985). It is therefore essential for a hotel to monitor the quality and performance of its employees, since they tend to be irregular in their performance, which can lead to an irregularity in the quality of the service offered (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995).

Process (P6): As mentioned above, the production and consumption of services is done simultaneously, and the processes through which customers consume are very important. These processes include booking, check-in and check-out, as well as all situations in which the client must wait, such as a restaurant, for example. Hotel management must ensure that these processes are standardized in order to maintain a consistent quality of service, which is competitive and client-oriented (Bowie & Buttle, 2004). The process relates to the processes involved in the life cycle of a product or service from conception to after sales, it is the key to Brand Management. Brand management is a standardization of a product, service or brand. The process part of this involves producing a product or service that reflects the mission, vision and values of a company (Grönroos, 1990; Wale, 2009).

Physical Evidence (P7): Physical evidence encompasses the tangible face of service products including; premises, vehicles, company websites and appearance and behaviour of

staff (Wale, 2009). The physical proof, or physical environment, includes all the tangible aspects that can be found in the establishment, namely the external appearance (landscapes and luminosity, for example) as well as the interior fittings (decor and furnishings). Signage and atmospheres are also part of the service scape (Hudson, 2008). It is very important because it is a quality vector in the eyes of the clientele and enables it to assess the level of service to be considered (Shostack, 1977). According to Shostack (1977), the more intangible the service is, the greater the need to make it tangible. However, intangible factors such as the atmosphere are also related to physical evidence. In conclusion, the offer of the facility depends entirely on the attractiveness the physical environment provides to the client (Bowie & Buttle, 2004).

Figure 1: The 7 P's of service marketing



Source: Compilation based on McCarthy (1964) and Bitner & Booms (1981)

Brand Reputation

According to Kasper Ulf Nielsen, Reputation Institute's executive partner (www.reputationinstitute.com, 2013), 'we live in a time when word of mouth is the number one driver of sales and competitive advantage'. "Investing in reputation will pay off on the bottom line." But what is Brand Reputation?

Brand reputation refers to the customer perception of a company as well as its products and services. Fombrun (1996, pp. 37) defines reputation as “the overall estimation in which a company is held by its constituents”. In this context, both practitioners and scholars agree on the aspect that a positive reputation facilitates a profitable brand and leads to competitive benefits (Herbig & Milewicz, 1995; Roper & Fill, 2012).

When it comes to building reputation, corporations need to ask themselves how their environment perceives them (Urde & Greyser, 2014). Thus, brand reputation represents the attractiveness of the brand towards employees, suppliers, investors, communities and customers (Blakstad & Cooper, 1995).

According to Beevolve Consultancy Group (posted in January 2017 to www.beevolve.com/brand-management), “if your brand reputation is bad, no one would want to associate with your company or buy products/services from you. A brand’s reputation can make or break the company. Just Google your company or brand name and see what comes up. If what you see is unflattering then you have a serious problem at hand because you will lose the majority of prospective customers who prefer to look you up on major search engines before even coming to your website and deciding to do business with you” However, is this the main reason why brand reputation should be managed?

It is important to note that Filieri et al, (2015) research model examined perceived website trust and its influence on intention behaviour (e.g. recommendation adoption and word of mouth) rather than actual behaviour. However, as negative word-of-mouth may negatively affect the brand reputation of a company, it requires detection and intervention (Malthouse, 2007). On the other hand, it is difficult to control negative electronic word of mouth (WOM), as it expands with a high speed and reach. Therefore, companies need to monitor the online platforms where their brands are likely to be discussed; it is essential to monitor both branded platforms and consumer-generated ones, as 70% of all online complaints are posted on the latter (Noort & Willemsen, 2011).

But, why monitoring is key to managing a brand’s reputation? In fact, according to Beevolve Consultancy Group (ibid), “Listening to what people is saying about your company, its products or services and key personnels is the key to managing your brand’s reputation. If people are complaining about your company or product/services on social media, you want to be able to find that and take action immediately to diffuse the situation. In a hyper-connected social world, the risk of not responding to negative comments or conversations could be huge. A negative tweet or Facebook post that goes viral will do unimaginable damage to your brand’s reputation. There are tons of cases of brands getting destroyed or permanently scarred by either not responding to complaints online or responding back in a negative tone”.

The Concept of TripAdvisor

TA builds scale and creates network effects from User Generated Content (UGC) on the most atomic level by contributor and user. O'Connor (2008) investigates the implications of user generated content for travel businesses, focusing in particular on hotel reviews on TripAdvisor.com.

By analyzing the 1042 listed reviews on TripAdvisor.com for the London market, he found that 'all hotels sampled on Tripadvisor.com had been the subject of multiple reviews, where consumers voiced their opinions about experiences in that property. Given the number of visitors to the site, it's clear that this content is being consulted; the guest experience is becoming essentially transparent; and reviews are having an effect on consumer decisions. And given the increasing numbers of web-savvy consumers, increased focus on social media and the continued growth of online travel sales, its importance can only grow in the future'.

According to Heather Stimmler-Hall (posted in February 2016 to Medium) "It's no secret that most travellers will eventually end up on TA when planning their vacation. It has become the Google of the travel world, where people go for honest, unbiased reviews of hotels, restaurants, sights and activities by fellow travellers. However the information on TA is anything but honest and unbiased, and it's only getting worse". She also states "While TA may have started as a sort of consumer watchdog site empowering hotel guests, I've watched it turn into a greedy travel monopoly profiting at the expense of both travellers and small businesses".

The main motivations for people to read TA reviews are listed in Table 1, which prompts them to write reviews are listed in Table 2. Finally, the importance of TA rankings are shown in Table 3.

Table1: The main motivations for people to read TripAdvisor reviews

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- "82% of users agree that TA helps them to plan better trips"
 - "The majority of TA users want one place where they can read reviews, compare prices and book (63%)"
 - "The two most important things for TA users when reading reviews are up to date information (42%) and quantity (30%). Travellers want to know that what they are reading is current and they want lots of reviews to help them form an overall sense of people's opinions"
 - "83% of TA global users will "usually" or "always" reference TA reviews before making a booking decision on a hotel"
 - "96% of global TA users consider reading reviews important when planning and booking hotels"
 - "93% of TA users globally find the hotel reviews to be accurate of the actual experience"
 - "The majority of TA users will read at least 6-12 TA reviews before choosing a hotel (79%)"
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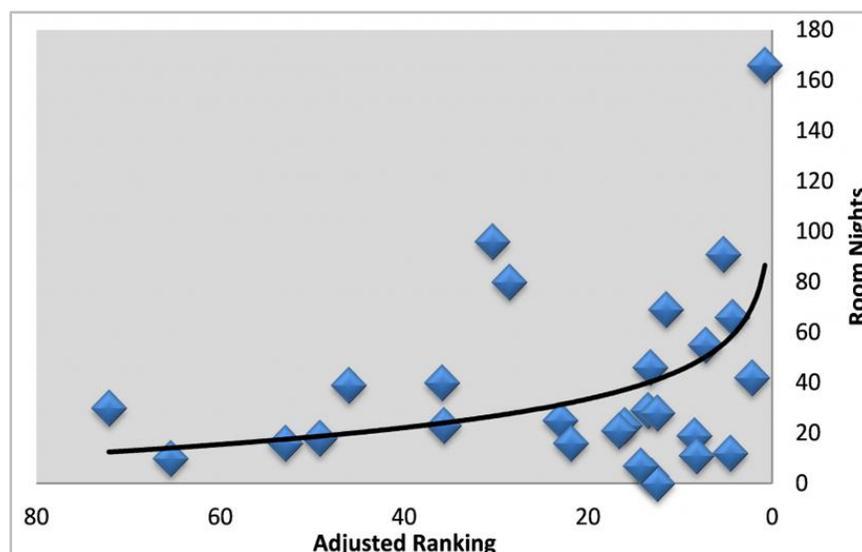
Source: TripAdvisor Insights (2016)

Table 2: The main motivations for people to write reviews

- “73% of TA users wrote a review in the past year because they wanted to share a good experience with travellers”
- “70% of TA users wrote a review in the past year because they received good advice from reviews and wanted to pay it forward/give back to the community”
- “The majority of TripAdvisor’s global users will not book a hotel which does not have any reviews (54%)”

Source: TripAdvisor Insights (2016)

Figure 2: The weight of TripAdvisor in the room booking



Source: TripBarometer (Travel Trends 2016)

Table 3: The importance of TripAdvisor Rankings

1) Rankings matter to a hotels customer.

- “67% of Customers don’t book hotels after reading 1 to 3 negative reviews, 93% of Customers are influenced by Online Reviews Customers won’t book a hotel without online reviews and 53% of Customers are 3X less likely to stay at hotel with 3 stars vs. 4 star ratings”.

2) Rankings matter to a hotels customer

- “Improvements in TA rankings lead directly to higher bookings, average daily rate (ADR) and revenue. That’s obvious, but the below data has quantified it”.
- “The below data spoke for itself – the closer a property is to a Number 1 ranking on TA for its given market, the greater its direct online bookings”.
- “56% Hotels ranked #1 get 56% more direct bookings every month than hotels ranked #40 in their city”.
- “The Figure 2 details the number of room nights booked for a hotel compared to it’s ranking on TA”.

3) High rankings get hotels additional benefits	Table 3...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Top 30 hotels have their property visible on Page 1. Top 5 hotels can be seen by all customers looking at your city as a destination. Top 3 hotels with a special offer can be included in a newsletter at no charge to you”. 	
<p>4) TA is big</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “TA is by far the largest review site on the planet accounting for more reviews than the next 10 review sites combined with over 50 million reviews”. 	
<p>5) Tripadvisor’s rankings are used by OTAs (Online Travel Agencies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ranking high on TA does not only help you get referral traffic and bookings from TA but also enables you to get more bookings from all OTAs”. • “Literally every OTA today uses the TA rankings to help their users find hotels. Below is just a list (Booking.com, Cleartrip, Makemytrip.com and Expedia.com) of some of the OTAs who’re using TripAdvisor’s rankings”. • “Get a high ranking on TA and you’ll get more bookings from these OTAs too”. 	

Source: TripBarometer (Travel Trends 2016)

METHODOLOGY

I use two stages for this research. A qualitative research method with a case study approach was used to answer the research questions (1, 3 and 4) of this study. To answer the research question 2, I needed conclusions based on data using the quantitative approach.

According to Kozinets (2002), qualitative methods are particularly useful for revealing the rich symbolic world that underlies needs, desires, meanings and choice. To better assess the main motivations of TA users behaviour qualitative research proves most suitable.

According to Yin (2003), case study approaches can be segmented as being descriptive, explanatory or exploratory. This study represents an exploratory attempt to analysing why and how companies manage brand reputation at SME in a Tourism sector context based on three ways on conducting research : search literature, talking to experts (See Table 4) and conducting focus groups interviews (Saunders et al, 2009).

Research Design

This research refers to the case study of SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel, a Tunisian Hotel that uses a digital marketing approach for brand reputation. The research design is based on an in-depth interview with the CEO of the hotel. The following questions are based upon the perspective of this research’s purpose of describing and analysing the attraction and retain tourists. A total of nine questions have been addressed the first, third and fourth research questions (see table 4).

Table 4: Questionnaire for the SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel CEO.

1. Through which channels does the hotel inform tourists concerning the structure in general?
2. How does the hotel inform tourists about the services offered during their stay?
3. How does the hotel conduct service marketing towards tourists?
4. What promotional instruments are believed to be important for the hotel?
5. Could you elaborate on the staff interaction towards tourists?
6. Personal contacts with support, administrative and technical staff is of importance for services marketing. How does the hotel manage these entities?
7. How does the hotel manage the loyalty phase concerning tourists?
8. The loyalty process deals with the tourist's understandability and satisfaction of obtaining a holiday service. How well does the hotel correspond to this circumstance?
9. Image and reputation are important factors for hotels to attract and retain tourists. What activities do you implement to enhance the hotel's image and reputation?

Source: Author's elaboration.

To analyse the second research question, the data analysed in this work were extracted from TA (www.tripadvisor.com).

Concerning the factors most and least considered by customers in terms of marketing services, I decided to analyse the results provided by the tool TA in the last 12 months, concerning the satisfaction of customers with respect to the different services and products offered. With regard to the case study, the 264 reviews were posted on TA by people who visited the Hotel. The data was collected and gathered on December 2016 and analysed in December 2016/January 2017. TA Review Statistics for the SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Web Data from TA with R Software can be found below in table 5.

Table 5: Scraping Tripadvisor Review Statistics SunConnect Djerba Hotel Web Data

Elements	All mentions	Excellent	Very good	Average	Poor	Terrible	% Excellent	% Very good	% Average	% Poor	% Terrible
a	264	137	82	27	9	9	52	31	10	3,5	3,5
b	164	87	61	14	1	1	53	37,5	8,5	0,5	0,5
c	32	12	11	5	2	2	37,5	34,5	15,5	6,25	6,25
d	37	17	12	4	3	1	46,5	32,5	11	8,25	2,75
e	108	44	38	15	7	4	40,5	35	14	6,5	4
f	185	105	57	17	2	4	56,75	31	9,25	1	2
g	197	99	64	20	8	6	50,25	32,5	10,15	4,15	3
h	45	23	16	6	0	0	51	35,5	13,5	0	0
i	49	25	17	5	0	2	51,25	34,5	10,25	0	4
j	5	3	1	0	1	0	60	20	0	20	0

a: Hotel, b: Offer (Product), c: Price, d: Food, e: Sea, f: People (Staff), g: Room, h: Service, i: Reception, j: Internet.

Source: Author's elaboration based on TripAdvisor (2016)

The Case Study 'TheSunConnect Djerba Aqua Hotel'

According to the Web site Company, "The SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort was created in 1993. With traditional, elegant architecture on the outside and modern facilities on the inside, SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort is a charming base for your beach break in Djerba. There is a great choice of bars, restaurants and entertainment to keep the whole family happy. Spacious rooms and a comfy style help guests feel at ease. The beach is just a short walk away".

"The hotel is situated in the Midoun area of Djerba, just 800 metres from Djerba's golf course. The City Centre of Djerba is 6km away. The nearest airport is Djerba International Airport approximately 26 km away".

"SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort offers a total of 262 rooms of five different types (Single Room, Double Room for 2-3 persons (approx. 30 m², Family Room for 2-4 persons, including 2 children, Superior Family Room for 2-4 persons, Family Room with two bedrooms for 2-5 persons, including 1 child, Apartment (approx. 110m²). Each room is furnished with: Partial air conditioning, Balcony or terrace, Double bed or twin beds, Extra bed, Satellite TV, Safety deposit box, Small fridge, Bathroom with bathtub or shower, and Hairdryer".

"Food & Beverage: SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort offers a buffet restaurant and a themed à-la-carte restaurant. There are three bars to choose from both indoors and on the beach, as well as a snack bar serving lighter dishes. Enjoy a coffee, tea or something sweet from the Moorish café".

"Pool & Beach: SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort offers an outdoor pool, a children's pool, integrated into the adults' pool and an indoor pool in the spa area. Pool and beach towels (against a deposit) as well as sun loungers by the pool area are provided by the hotel. The nearest beach is Djerba Beach 300 m away from the hotel".

"Sports, Relaxation & Entertainment: Guests can choose from a variety of daytime activities, such as aerobics, aqua aerobics, basketball, darts, football, mini-golf, bocce ball, table tennis, volleyball and water-polo. Moreover, the resort has four tennis courts. If you like to relax, you can do so in the hotel's spa area with an indoor pool, saunas, Turkish bath and with various treatments (against extra charge). Evening entertainment usually includes live music and shows. Younger guests can participate in fun activities offered at the Connect Kids Club (4-12 years) or at the ConnectTeen Lounge".

"Internet: Free Wi-Fi is offered throughout the entire hotel area at SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort."

"Additional Information: Reception, Laundry Service, Car Rental and Planned visits by Thomas Cook representatives at least twice a week". (www.sunconnectresorts.com/company-information/)

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Replies to the four research questions are provided throughout the case study. In order to reply to the first research question “What marketing strategy do hotels use to attract and retain clients?”, the following results: According to Tarek Anane (2016), Take care of the current offer by starting with TripAdvisor's comments, suggesting new attractions, adjusting the price according to supply, demand and seasons. In addition, he worked on the hotel's atmosphere (renovation, painting, extension of spaces) as well as communication. For example, he used Tunisian newspaper and TV to attract local tourist and Internet and OATs partnership for foreign tourists.

Finally, Tarek Anane will work to improve the Internet connection, the customer service and the quality management service because our hotel belongs to the category of facilities with 4 stars.

The second research question consists in providing descriptions of the factors that are highest and lowest considered by clients in terms of marketing services. In the case of SunConnectDjerba Aqua Resort, I focused on the number of references to different products and services, I have observed that the four most cited elements are: hotel in general (264 mentions), room (197 mentions), service 45 mentions) and the meal (37 mentions). On the other hand, I note that the least cited items in the customer reviews are the internet / Wi-Fi (5 mentions), the price (32 mentions), the staff (People) (185 mentions), (See Table 5).

However, if I focus on the percentages of satisfaction, I can see that the elements most appreciated by customers are the package offer and the staff (People) (90% and 87, 5% positive), the service (86% of positive mentions); as well as reception, hotel and room (85%, 83% and 82% positive), respectively. On the other hand, when I look at the percentages of negative mentions, I can see that the Internet (20% negative) and the price (10% negative) are the most important.

In analysing the comments, I can see that the most cited elements are the offer of the hotel as well as the staff, the reception, the hotel and the room. I can therefore deduce that the factors most considered in terms of marketing mix are the place, the price and the processes.

Regarding the third research question which consists of analysing why the hotel is concerned about the reputation, results show how the main effects of these initiatives affect the loyalty that shows a relevant increase. This confirms what was supported by Herbig & Milewicz (1995) and Roper & Fill (2012).

Indeed, customers trust reviews by other travelers more than they do official business communication, because they assume that the reviews are independent. Online reviews are an important source of information for customers booking accommodation and travel. Even if they

do not book their travel online, most customers will at least review Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) and review sites before making a booking decision. The increasing use of mobile devices for making travel bookings further enhances the importance of online reviews for travel decisions. While some issues surrounding fake exams have reduced the confidence consumers place on them, they still affect most travel decisions and damage the reputation of the hotel. Therefore I must remain vigilant (See appendix 1 & appendix 2).

Finally, the fourth research question aims to explain “How can hotel manage brand reputation through their marketing approaches to attract and retain tourists?”. According to Tarek Anane (2016), An online marketing department is created and dedicated to the following mission: *‘putting more and more energy into over ranking those negative TA comments, negative Google results, answering to negative publicity, answering the questions on forums’*(See appendix1 & appendix 2).

According to Vermeulen & Seegers (2008), ‘online reviews should benefit hoteliers: It suggests that positive reviews have a positive impact on consumer behaviour, whereas negative reviews have little impact. This does not mean that negative reviews are harmless’. Therefore, to manage negative reviews, hotel should invest in human resources in a general manner and in customer service in a particular way for the next item: *‘thank them for the review, highlight any positive comments made, assure them you are taking it seriously, address the specific complaint, point out where you provided relevant info, explain the remedial action you will take, let them know you’re shocked / explain what happened (if relevant) and provide an offline channel to continue the conversation’* (See appendix1 & appendix 2).

The consolidated elements of the mix or the comments give a total satisfaction and act on the other elements of the mix deemed insufficient by the customers. Marketing actions have been put in place, such as recruiting well-trained staff, training staff in certain departments and, above all, communicating the efforts made by management.

The hotel invests in modern new attractions (“water slides”, which will be operational from the summer of 2017). The hotel reviews its Human Resources Management strategy. It is about attracting the right people, so that customer satisfaction depends on the ambitions of management. Moreover, interactions with customers by responding to their comments are typical examples to improve image and reputation. Responding to reviews is crucial. According to ReviewPro (Guest Intelligence solutions for the hospitality industry, posted in November 2016), ‘The TA study also highlights the importance of a hotel’s response to a review, 85% of users agree that a thoughtful response to a bad review will improve their impression of the hotel — an increase of more than 50% since 2013 and 4 out of 5 TA users believe that hotels that respond to reviews care more about their guests’.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper is to describe main objectives and strategies pursued by hotel in expected return on investment of their strategy on branding reputation through TA comments.

First my results demonstrate that the main scope consists of increasing the culture of digital and the recruitment of staff with a specific knowledge in marketing, reception, animations, and training the existing staff in order to provide well-prepared service.

This emphasizes how the importance of service / product usage and consumption is well present in the strategies of SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel because the inability to use a product can prevent the exploitation of its potential (Bitner & Booms, 1981; Morisson, 1990). SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel adopts also a strategy that allows possible participants to try its courses by offering the first educational course for free (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995; Wale, 2009).

The second research question shows that tourists tend to share similar preferences. In SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel's case, staff member interaction (*people*) and availability of reception department, rooms (*place*) were valued highest. On the other hand, Internet and the price were valued low. Table 5 shows how Tourists valued these factors.

The third research question aims to emphasize and increase the reputation as well as to make evident that a positive reputation facilitates a profitable brand and margins (Herbig & Milewicz, 1995; Roper & Fill, 2012).

Regarding the fourth research question, SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel proposes to its customers a new service to attract attention, acquisition, use or consumption to satisfy a want or a need (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009) and to improve the other components of mix service who are less considered by customers.

Finally, the case of SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort Hotel shows that the use of comments left on TA creates value for consumers by listening to them and retaining them by offering quality; and creates value for the hotel by maximizing its revenues.

As Ben Youssef et al, (2015) noted, new information and communication technologies (NICTs) and social networks are developing and becoming tools to transform satisfied travellers into brand ambassadors or spokespersons for the respective brand, capable of persuading other travellers via C2C online marketing. Therefore, giving voice to the persons who experience places and who share their impressions turned out to be a promising approach for creating place branding campaigns (Mosca et al, 2016). In fact, the role of marketing is, on the one hand, to develop and communicate value propositions to customers, and on the other hand, to support customers' value creation through goods, services, information and other resources, as well as through interactions where co-creation of value can take place (Grönroos, 2006).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Results of this study suggest important managerial implications:

Firstly, the concept of destination brand reputation can create customer-perceived value. This means that territorial brands chiefly promoted by tourists and local shareholders inspire a certain degree of authenticity.

Secondly, listening to what people are saying about a brand's offers (products or services and personal) is the key to managing a brand's reputation. If people complain about the offer (products / services) on social media, brands should be interested to find this out and act immediately to solve the issue.

In addition, it is easier to introduce the new product/service into the distribution or into the OATs, as the reputation of the brand is one of the main criteria adopted by point of sale managers or through Internet in the choice of new products/services (Bassani et al, 2011, pp. 233).

Finally, in a hyper-connected social world, the risk of not responding to negative comments or conversations could be enormous. A negative TA comment that goes viral will do unimaginable damage to a brand's reputation.

O'Connor (2008) already states 'The importance online social media may have in promoting single operators and the destination as a whole. On their part, hotel owners and managers definitely need to acknowledge this role and should intensify their efforts to develop and expand their usage of today's online interactive technologies in order to improve their position on the market'.

According to Medros, SVP Global Product at TA (posted in June 2013 to www.forbes.com), "*If you asked our users why they write reviews they say 'TA helped me and I want to help others,'*". And then there is the scale. Based on this quotation and the results of my research, I conclude that TA could be "the alternative to market research" because the hotel can use this data to refine its target market, to launch a new attraction (e.g. 'water slides'), to customize your special offers with the goal to create value for the customer (living an interesting experience) and value for the structure (maximize revenue).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the important contribution of this paper to the literature on Brand reputation and Social media, it should be considered in the light of important limits. The exploratory nature of this study leads to an additional limitation, as the data reflect only a snapshot of reviews on TA.

As underlined by Yin (2003), case study research suffers from limited generalizability and has reduced external validity. It considers the analysis of a single case study, not allowing a

comparison among different experiences of TA comments. Secondly, it collects only the opinion of few customers that spent a short time in this hotel.

To further analyse the potential of the presented TA reviews and their impact on customer experiences, it is necessary to adopt a more holistic approach to include the recognition of contributions of volunteers and all types of involved stakeholders. Yet, as business economics evolve and change, the need to consider the effects of launching and adding new attractions / new products to the principal core activity. In this context, empirical studies using quantitative analyses to explore the importance of online social media of attracting tourists and how this contributes to manage brand reputation, would be recommended for further research. Especially, it would be especially interesting to focus on using the TA reviews, and the relationship between reputation and value.

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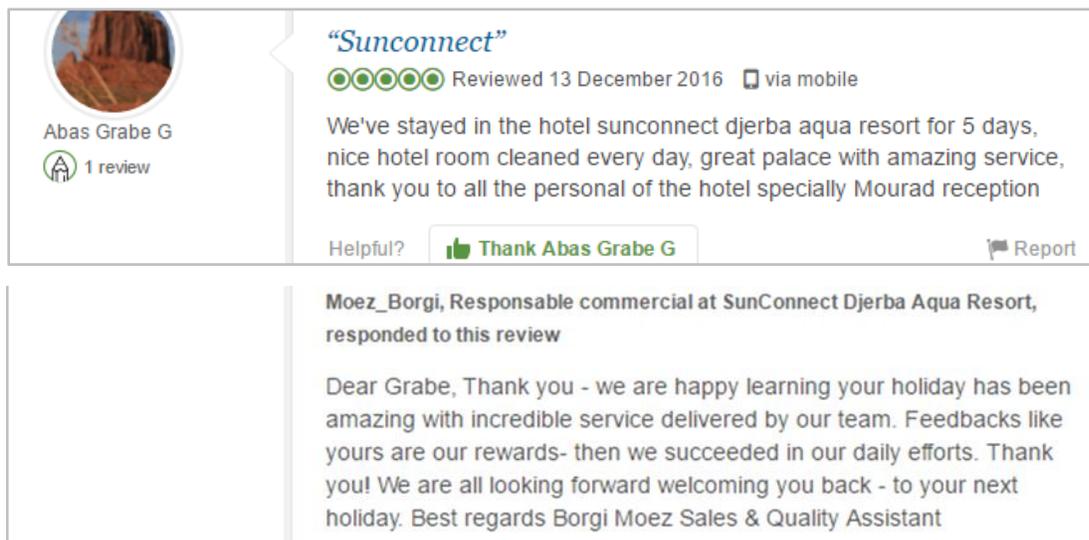
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: TripAdvisor Response Examples After Receiving a Positive Review



The screenshot shows a TripAdvisor review for Sunconnect. The reviewer, Abas Grabe G, has written a positive review dated 13 December 2016, reviewed via mobile. The review text is: "We've stayed in the hotel sunconnect djerba aqua resort for 5 days, nice hotel room cleaned every day, great palace with amazing service, thank you to all the personal of the hotel specially Mourad reception". Below the review, there is a 'Helpful?' button with a thumbs-up icon and the text 'Thank Abas Grabe G', and a 'Report' button.

Below the review, a response from Moez_Borgi, Responsible commercial at SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort, is shown. The response text is: "Dear Grabe, Thank you - we are happy learning your holiday has been amazing with incredible service delivered by our team. Feedbacks like yours are our rewards- then we succeeded in our daily efforts. Thank you! We are all looking forward welcoming you back - to your next holiday. Best regards Borgi Moez Sales & Quality Assistant".

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g297948-d582119-Reviews-SunConnect_Djerba_Aqua_Resort-Midoun_Djerba_Island_Medenine_Governorate.html#REVIEWS

Appendix 2: TripAdvisor Response Examples After Receiving a Negative Review



lee k
leeds

 1 review

 1 helpful vote

“avoid for 2 month”

 Reviewed 1 July 2015  via mobile

Me and my partner stayed at this hotel for one week and within that time we had to move rooms due to the horrific smell in the room, went on to the beach Sunday they was working on the new water slides had to come away due to the noise, no names on the sauces and some foods, toilet wasn't clean when we first entered our room, I SPOKE WITH THE DIRECTOR AND EVEN HE AGREED WE HAVE OPENED THE HOTEL TWO EARLY AFTER THE REFURBISHMENT.

Stayed June 2015, travelled as a couple

Vanessa_Meeuwenoord1, Manager at SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort, responded to this review

Dear Lee,

The hotel management team at SunConnect Djerba Aqua Resort are sorry to hear that your expectations were not exceeded on your last holiday and not given the chance to meet you at the hotel.

A brand-new waterpark is being built on the beach and the opening date will be announced online. During your stay the buffet menu was on display at the restaurant and buffet items have proper tags now.

At the time of your stay we had approximately 250 guests and we received a lot of positive feedback at the time. We would like the opportunity to serve you again on your future holidays.

Best regards

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g297948-d582119-Reviews-SunConnect_Djerba_Aqua_Resort-Midoun_Djerba_Island_Medenine_Governorate.html#REVIEWS