

Hotel Positioning: A Case of Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel



Source: Unsplash (2021)

Background

Opened in 2018, the Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel is a 4-star hotel comprises 471 guestrooms and suites that blend contemporary design with nature-inspired décor. The hotel also offers versatile event facilities, including a spacious pillar-free ballroom (Ocean Park Hong Kong, n.d.). Catering to both local residents and international travelers, the hotel provides a variety of services and stay packages tailored to different guest needs.

To appeal to visitors of Ocean Park and its adjacent water park, the hotel offers themed accommodation packages such as the “Ocean Park Experience Package” and the “Water World Experience Package.” These include one night of hotel accommodation, breakfast for two, and two admission tickets to either Ocean Park Hong Kong or Ocean Park Water World (Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel, n.d.). The hotel’s convenient location, connected to Ocean Park Hong Kong by a foot bridge and offering complimentary shuttle service to the water park, makes it an ideal base for theme park visitors.

As part of its differentiation strategy, the hotel features specially themed guestrooms, including Whiskers Submarine, Redd Forest, and Bao Bao Paradise. These rooms incorporate design elements inspired by Ocean Park attractions, creating a more immersive and cohesive experience for park-goers. The hotel further enhances its appeal by collaborating with popular anime series to launch limited-time themed packages. A notable example is the Father of Gundam’s World package, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Mobile Suit Gundam creator Mr. Kunio Okawara (Geek Culture, 2023).

The hotel also emphasizes festive experiences and seasonal programming. In addition to themed decorations, special menus, and celebratory activities, it creatively utilizes its signature 50-foot-tall aquarium in the hotel lobby. For instance, during Easter, divers dressed in bunny costumes swim among the fish, offering a memorable visual experience for guests (Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel Instagram, 2024).

In addition, the hotel capitalizes on major local events by launching timely promotions. During the annual Hong Kong Sevens, one of city's largest sporting events, the hotel introduced the *Rugby Greatest Hits Room Package*, which included accommodation, buffet breakfast, and a one-day ticket to the event (Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel Instagram, 2024). These targeted packages allow the hotel to reach niche markets and distinguish itself from competitors through strategic product design and timely marketing.

Challenges

Despite being positioned as a theme park hotel and targeting Ocean Park visitors, the Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel operates independently from Ocean Park Hong Kong. This has led to guest dissatisfaction stemming from a perceived disconnect between the hotel experience and the park itself. Inconsistent branding and limited integration with Ocean Park's offerings have contributed to unmet guest expectations.

Moreover, the hotel's current business model is easy to replicate. Competing properties, such as the Hong Kong Disneyland Resorts, charge higher rates but offer more luxurious and immersive experiences featuring globally recognized Disney characters. This gives them a competitive edge in attracting families, the same demographic targeted by Ocean Park Marriott's themed rooms. Since developing time-sensitive packages for niche markets involves minimal investment, the barriers to entry for similar offerings are low, potentially intensifying competition from new entrants in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. What strategies can the hotel implement to create a stronger sense of connection to Ocean Park for its guests?
2. What additional marketing tactics could the hotel explore to attract guests who are not visiting Ocean Park?
3. How can the hotel innovate or modify its business model to protect itself from being imitated by new competitors?

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- Hotel Positioning Strategy
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- Experiential Marketing

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