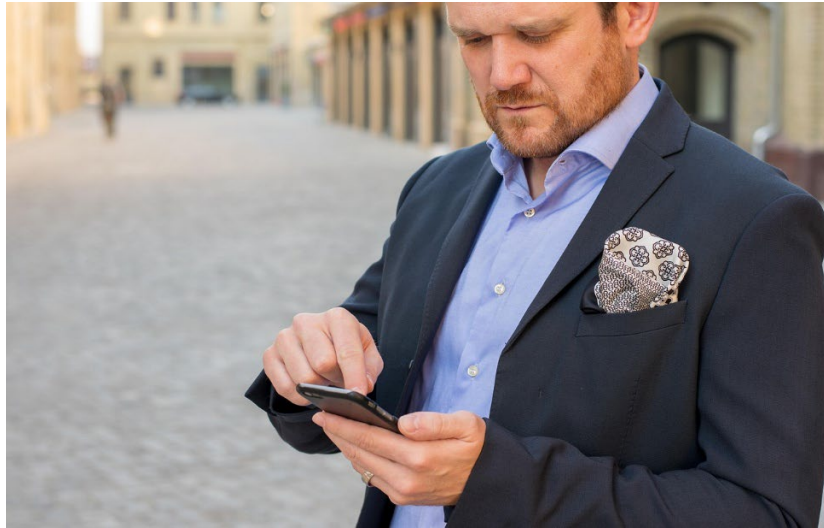


Usage of Mobile Application in Hotel Industry: A Case of H World App



Source: Pixabay (2019)

Background

Mobile applications have long been used in the hotel industry since 2009 (Mo Kwon et al., 2013), with major chains like Accor and Marriott developing their own apps (ALL.com & Marriott Bonvoy App) to promote customer satisfaction and loyalty (Parapanos & Michopoulou, 2023).

The H World app is a mobile application developed by the H World Group (华住会), which manages over 9000 hotels worldwide. The all-in-one digital platform not only aims to optimize customer experience, but to establish itself as an excellent marketing tool by offering a wide range of opportunities for targeted marketing and customer loyalty (China Lodging Group, 2023).

The app features 17 different services from booking to self-check-in, in-room services, and post-check-out rewards (TravelDaily China, 2022). Users can pay through the app, access information about local experiences, and book amenities like washing machines, all from a single platform (TravelDaily China, 2022). The app is also linked to “H Rewards”, a loyalty program that provides exclusive offers and discounts, incentivizing customers to book via the app and collect points (Huazhu, 2020). By providing value throughout the customer journey from initial use to post-adoption, the app promotes loyalty and revisits (Stocchi et al., 2022).

Challenges

Although the implementation of the H World app can streamline the entire process of a stay—from booking to post-check-out—and promote customer satisfaction and loyalty, it might not create a significant competitive advantage for H World Group (华住会). Key competitors, including both international hotel chains and domestic rivals such as Jin Jiang International (锦江国际) and Marriott International, have heavily invested in their apps to enhance customer

experience. The features of these apps are very similar across hotel groups, making it challenging for the H World app to stand out from the competition.

Discussion Questions

1. How do mobile applications like the H World app enhance the overall customer experience in the hotel industry?
2. What features within the H World app do you think are most likely to encourage user engagement, and why?
3. How important is it for hotel to include local experiences and amenities in their app? What impact does this have on customer satisfaction?
4. In comparison to traditional loyalty schemes, how effective do you think loyalty programs in mobile apps like "H Rewards" are?
5. Given that many hotel brands are developing their own mobile applications, how can H World Group differentiate its app to create a competitive advantage?

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Keywords

- Hospitality
- Mobile technology
- Customer experience
- Self-service technology
- Loyalty program
- Personalization
- Customer engagement

Acknowledgement

This case study is based on and adapted from the work of Master's student Magdalena M. Rieder from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.