

The Concept Of Channel Productivity Ratio In Rooms Division And Its Utility In Star Rated Hotels

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Abstract

Today the hospitality industry is booming day by day which is impacting by rise in number of hotels. The supply of rooms is increasing and to meet the optimal revenue, hotels are implementing revenue management in various areas of the hotel. Revenue management takes into consideration the five elements, namely product, price,

customer, time and distribution channel. The number of distribution channels for hotels have increased over the past few years which has also helped hotels optimizing the room revenue. But there is no concrete measure to check productivity of a said distribution channel. The paper explains the concept and derivation of channel productivity ratio and how this ratio can be utilized in star category hotels.

Key terms- Room revenue, Revenue management, Channel Management, Channel productivity ratio

Introduction

The meaning of hotel mentioned in a dictionary says it is a building where money can be paid for a room to sleep and where we can get meals. It is an establishment which provides paid lodging facilities for a short term. As per Tewari (2010) hotel is defined by British law where if a bonafide traveler has the position to pay, he can get food and shelter if he is in a fit condition to receive it. Today hotel industry is booming all over the world. If we consider India, as per HVS report on Hotels in India- Trends and opportunities 2016-17 there has been a 300% increase in number of rooms in star category hotels in last 15 years. Room revenue forms an integral part of the hotel revenue. Almost 60% of the revenue which hotels earn comes from rooms. So, the equation that more the room revenue more is the profitability is considered in hotels. As we see a boom in the hotel industry over the past years there has been an over supply of rooms in most parts of India. Pune is one such market. The over supply of rooms resulted in increasing cut throat competition in the market. Hotels started price wars to earn their fair share in the market. So, the prices went down in terms of low room rates. On the other hand, the ever-increasing costs were hampering the profitability of hotels. To tackle the situation, hotels started using the concept of revenue management to optimize room revenue.

Need of study

As per Hereter (2017) revenue management is selling the right product or service to the right customer at the right time, at the right price using the right distribution channel. So, revenue management has five major elements- product, customer, time, price and distribution channel. Compared to earlier times the number of distribution channels over the year have increased. The number of online distribution channels have also increased in past few years. Hotels use these all channels to generate revenue but there is n concrete parameter to measure performance of the distribution channel. Just measuring the average room rate generated by any channel is not a performance measure. Each distribution channel incurs certain cost in terms of employee training, booking fees, technology fees, commissions etc. While measuring the performance these factors also need to be taken into consideration. So, we have to study the performance of a distribution channel not only in terms of room revenue earned but also in terms of cost incurred. The channel productivity ratio is thus developed, to measure the performance of each channel used by the hotel.

Literature review

A distribution channel is defined as a source of potential room reservations. (Woods R, Ninemier J, Hayes D, Austin M, 2007). As per Mayer (2014), distribution channel is a vehicle to make available a product or service to a guest. Distribution channel expansion is a mandatory step for business development in hotel industry. It means using advanced technology and worldwide partners in optimizing revenue (Wang, Heo, Schwartz, Legohere, Speckling, 2008). New channels challenge the management by having the right choice of distribution channel which helps in brand development, add value and build customer loyalty (Beneder, 2015). As per Ivanov (2014), each distribution channel provider new customer segments and has various costs to sustain its operations. As per Dipoli (2017), distribution channels act as a link between demand and supply and bridge the gap of space, variety, quantity, time and communication information. Distribution is recognized as an important source in competitive marketing mix as maintaining level of competition by using product, pricing and promotion has

become difficult (Dirzanskyte, 2015). As per Choi and Kimes (2002), managing of revenue using various distribution channels require revising of revenue management forecasting and optimization models. Channel management is finding the right compromise between demand generation and revenue leakage (Woods R, Ninemier J, Hayes D, Austin M, 2007).

Concept of channel productivity ratio

Every distribution channel provides the hotel with certain revenue and there is some cost involved in maintaining and using the distribution channel. The major distribution channels in hotels are-

1. Hotel reservation office
2. Hotel sales office
3. Central reservation office
4. Walk ins
5. Hotel website
6. Global distribution systems
7. Online travel agent websites
8. Offline travel agents
9. Meta search engines

Each channel has a good potential to earn revenue but it is up to the hotel whether it is using the channel up to its true potential. If we consider costs different channels have different costs. The cost involved for sales office, reservation office and walk ins is the salary and training cost of the staff. Certain technology and implementation costs are applicable central reservation office and hotel websites. Global distribution systems require booking fees, travel implant commissions and technology fees. Similarly, offline and online travel agents charge commissions and meta search engines incur pay per click fees and some booking fees. So, while measuring productivity of any above channel we need to take into consideration the revenue earned and cost incurred.

Hence, we can define channel productivity as ratio of average room rate of the channel to average cost per room night incurred by channel.

Channel productivity ratio =	<u>Average room rate of the channel</u> Average cost per room night incurred by channel
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where,

Average room rate =	<u>Total room revenue earned by the channel</u> Total room nights of the channel
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And,

Average cost per room night =	<u>Total cost involved in channel management</u> Total room nights of the channel
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Illustration

Let us consider the below data for the month of June. The first table has the raw data in terms of room nights, room revenue and costs and in the second table we have the analysis to find out the channel productivity ratio.

Sr No	Channel	Room nights	Total room revenue earned	Total cost of channel
1	Hotel reservation office	200	900,000	85,000
2	Hotel sales office	1,500	5,700,000	800,000
3	Central reservation office			

		300	1,320,000	240,000
4	Walk ins	40	200,000	50,000
5	Hotel website	350	1,470,000	260,000
6	Global distribution systems	700	2,800,000	720,000
7	Online travel agent websites	450	1,755,000	950,000
8	Offline travel agents	130	507,000	230,000
9	Meta search engines	170	680,000	280,000
	Total	3,840	15,332,000	3,615,000

Sr No	Channel	Average room rate	Average cost per room night	Channel productivity ratio
1	Hotel reservation office	4500	425.0	10.6
2	Hotel sales office	3800	533.3	7.1
3	Central reservation office	4400	800.0	5.5
4	Walk ins	5000	1250.0	4.0
5	Hotel website	4200	742.9	5.7
6	Global distribution systems	4000	1028.6	3.9
7	Online travel agent websites	3900	2111.1	1.8
8	Offline travel agents	3900	1769.2	2.2
9	Meta search engines	4000	1647.1	2.4

If we see the second table there are various channel productivity ratios for different channels. The question is what value is ideal. If the channel productivity is above 5 then the channel is performing to the optimal level. If it between to 2 to 5 it is considered average performance and a scope for improvement is there. A channel productivity ratio between 1 to 2 is considered poor and a restructuring of framework for that particular

channel is required and if it below 1, it is considered as a loss from that particular channel.

Sr No	Channel	Channel productivity ratio	Level
1	Hotel reservation office	10.6	Optimal
2	Hotel sales office	7.1	Optimal
3	Central reservation office	5.5	Optimal
4	Walk ins	4.0	Average
5	Hotel website	5.7	Optimal
6	Global distribution systems	3.9	Average
7	Online travel agent websites	1.8	Poor
8	Offline travel agents	2.2	Average
9	Meta search engines	2.4	Average

Research methodology

The study is based on developing the new concept of channel productivity ratio and its utility in star rated hotels. To study the utility of the ratio, the 5 star hotels of Pune city were collected as a population. As per STR report 2017, Pune has 17 five-star hotels out of which 15 were selected on random basis for the study. The revenue managers of the hotels were contacted and the concept of channel productivity ratio was shared with them. After studying the ratio, they gave their inferences and in which areas the ratio can be useful in hotels. Considering, the research ethics and hotel request, the names of the hotels and revenue managers have been kept confidential.

Findings and Inferences

- Out of the total hotels 93.3% hotels mentioned that the channel productivity ratio is a useful tool to measure performance of various distribution channels.

- 73.3% hotels mentioned that a serious thought can be given on changing the marketing strategy for a distribution channel by studying the channel productivity ratio.
- 80% hotels mentioned that the ratio will help the hotel in ranking of the various channels used.
- 73.3% hotels mentioned that hotels can take decision to continue or discontinue using a certain distribution channel by studying the channel productivity ratio.
- 66.6% hotels mentioned that the channel productivity ratio can be a performance measure for performance appraisal of the revenue manager and general manager of the hotel.
- 53.3% hotels mentioned that hotels can display the channel productivity ratio to stake holders and owners as a positive performance metric.

Utility of channel productivity ratio

- To measure performance of various hotel distribution channels
- Act as an indicator in determining the marketing strategy for various distribution channels
- Ranking out the best distribution channel for hotel in a long run
- Help is removing out unwanted and low performing distribution channels
- Performance measure metric for revenue managers and general managers of hotels
- It be used to show hotel's positive performance to owners and stake holders

Conclusion

We can conclude that the channel productivity ratio can one of the useful tools in hotel revenue management especially in rooms division. Hotels can imply it at various levels like for a month, quarter, half year or full year. The ratio for the same channel can also be compared at various time frames. For example, a hotel can measure the channel

productivity ratio for its website for say two consecutive months and check if there is an improvement or not. Similarly, in chain hotels, the channel productivity ratio across all hotels can be measured to find out the star performer hotel. So, the ratio is a good performance measure but it is up to the hotel whether to use it or not.

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