



## Article Title

**Using comparative advertising to promote technology-based hospitality services.**

## Citation

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## Abstract

This research draws on regulatory focus theory to explore how to effectively advertise technology-based hospitality services. In an experiment, we compare four types of service ads: narrative-comparative, narrative-noncomparative, list-comparative, and list-noncomparative. Results reveal that narrative-comparative ads, portraying a superior service experience with the advertised brand against its competitors, can elicit gain perceptions, and therefore, they are more effective among promotion-focused individuals than their more prevention-focused counterparts. Conversely, list comparative ads, presenting attributes of the advertised brand and its competitors side-by-side, can induce either gain or loss perceptions, thus being effective among both promotion-focused and prevention-focused individuals. With no mention of a reference brand, noncomparative ads fail to generate regulatory fit thereby being less persuasive. Managerial implications for hospitality marketers are discussed.

## Summary

Many hospitality companies are striving to attract consumers with new service technologies. For example, Marriott and JetBlue have become the first major hotel chain and airline to accept Apple Pay. Starbucks has introduced free wireless charging for smartphone in select stores and McDonald's is planning to make wireless charging spots available in 2,000 restaurants by 2016. The findings of this study suggest that these hospitality companies should use comparative advertising to highlight their superior IT offerings. Hospitality marketers can create comparative advertisements based on ad examples in our study. Thus, the current study offers hospitality managers a novel means to enhance their advertising effectiveness. Moreover, hospitality marketers should consider the role of presentation format when creating comparative advertisements.

While the narrative format elicits gain perceptions and as such is particularly effective among promotion-focused consumers (e.g., U.S. consumers), the list format can generate either gain

or loss perceptions, depending on the viewer's regulatory focus. Consequently, the list format appeals to both promotion-focused and prevention-focused consumers. When it is difficult to assess the target market's regulatory focus or when the target market has mixed regulatory orientations (e.g., Hong Kong, Singapore), the list format might be more effective.