



Article Title

GUEST PERCEPTIONS OF HOTEL LOYALTY

Citation

Mason, D. D., Tideswell, C., & Roberts, E. (2006). Guest perceptions of hotel loyalty. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(2), 191-206.

Abstract

This research reports on a qualitative survey of hotel guest loyalty. The approach was unusual in several ways: It sought to measure loyalty in the general population of hotel users rather than selecting a population already known to be loyal, and instead of trying to identify personality traits in the guests' psychology that might be important, or ranking features of the hotel that might be determining factors, guests were simply asked what the term hotel loyalty meant to them. This approach has the advantage of not being influenced by any particular theory or restricted by the scope of the questions asked. The outcome of the analysis of their responses is a model of hotel loyalty created directly from the guests' own perceptions of loyalty. The model shows that "loyalty" is actually a dynamic concept balancing seven elements already found in previous research and involves an unstated or implied contract between the guest and the hotel. It also suggests that many of the determinants commonly held to influence loyalty are, in fact, not relevant.

Conclusion

The model proposed in this research offers an alternative way of thinking about loyalty to hotels. It suggests that loyalty is a complex and dynamic construct and depends upon the interaction of several key variables. Previous researchers have put forward many potential factors that are reputed to be relevant in determining or creating guest loyalty. However, the results of this research show that many of those factors are not found in a direct analysis of the perceptions of hotel guests. In addition, this research calls into question many of the assumptions underlying previous work, particularly the application of survey instruments consisting solely of predetermined questions. In particular, it seems that measuring hotel facilities and service cannot be done in isolation because each guest determines his or her own measure of value and builds this into his or her own personal loyalty construct. The model shows the importance of

personalizing the hotel guest relationship. Once a guest has established that the hotel gives appropriate value for money at some appropriate level of facilities and service, then loyalty is generated and sustained by the guest's perception that he or she is getting something that other guests are not. This gives a clear indication of how and where hotel management should direct their marketing efforts.