

THE ROLE OF THE HOTEL WEBSITE QUALITY IN CREATING CUSTOMERS' E-SATISFACTION

KATARZYNA BIEŁUSZKO,¹ ALEKSANDRA GROBELNA²

Gdynia Maritime University, POLAND

¹ e-mail: k.bieluszko@wpit.am.gdynia.pl

² e-mail: a.grobelna@wpit.am.gdynia.pl

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ABSTRACT

Evolution, news and continuous transformation of the electronic market, especially the growing and sophisticated online customer expectations, expect the hotel Website to be not only interactive, but first of all, proactive. This means that a Website is ahead of its usability, functionality, design (and other characteristics), needs and expectations of customers, providing them with a unique virtual experiences and emotions.

The purpose of the article is to identify the Websites leading traits and attributes which are relevant for customers' satisfaction with the virtual contact with a hotel.

The research problem is an attempt to answer the question of what a modern hotel Website should be like in order to provide satisfactory experience (e-experience) resulting from virtual interaction. Applied research methods is the critical analysis of the literature, including empirical studies and reports carried out in these issues.

Introduction

Nowadays, increasingly common access to broadband Internet and mobile devices makes booking online travel services a natural consequence of this phenomenon. Many people continue to buy them through a traditional channel, but more and more also precede their decision with explorations of an offer on the Internet. This is probably the result of a growing availability of the Internet in Poland. According to the NetTrack (2012) survey made in June

– August 2012, the percentage of population using Internet in Poland is almost 57% (17,147 mln people). We can observe systematic long-term growth of this index from 12% in 2001. At the same time it is worth noting, that in 2011, 29% travel services were purchased on the Internet, which is a 34% increase compared to 2010. Sales of services through online channels reached \$ 1 bln and are still growing (A sleeping..., 2012). According to data from the same report, last year, hotel reservations through the website provider accounted for 9 percent of all reservations. It is expected, that in 2013, it will be 11 percent. Even more interesting information concerns Western Europe and Asia. According to a study conducted by the Accor hotel system three in four business travelers from France, Germany and Great Britain book their hotels online: either directly via the hotel website (43%), or via an online travel agency (33%). The British are the most digital-savvy with nine out of ten reservations made on the Internet. The authors of these report say also that Asia-Pacific Business Travelers make over 82% of their bookings online (57% via hotel website and 25 % via travel website) (1st Barometer..., 2012).

In the light of the above facts, just marking the company's presence in the virtual world is no longer sufficient, because almost every hotel is already in it. In a virtual environment, there is an ongoing competitive struggle for attention, interest and commitment of a customer, and consequently of his or her buying intentions and behavior on-line. The idea for an interesting site that distinguishes the company, and above all, differentiates customer experience and emotions, becomes a key issue for the survival and competitiveness of the hotel facilities. Properly prepared and attractive hotel website becomes an important platform to build virtual relationships with clients, which may result in customer acquisition and creating a rewarding relationship with him, and finally in loyalty and recommendation for future customers.

Ideally, in the context of customer expectations, designed website also affects the efficiency of the organization. A hotel website contributes to saving labor costs, reduce phone-calls from customers seeking information about services, locations, prices, etc., simultaneously reduce hotel employees workload in answering telephone calls (Asgari et al., 2012). Therefore hotel employees can focus on serving guests efficiently or performing other important, operational tasks.

The features of the hotel services and their implications towards the virtual contact

Specific features of the hotel services (especially their intangible nature) make the purchase risky (Coulter and Coulter, 2002), which can result from the following facts (Kachniewska, 2002):

- at the time of purchase, the customer knows very little about the service,
- customer fears poor quality of the services and incurring some losses,
- it is not possible to make a proper assessment of the quality of service (before its consumption).

In addition, risk associated with purchasing can be perceived even more intensely due to the relatively high prices of the hotel services (Jaremen, 1999) and the fact that practically there is no compensation for the loss of free time (Fache, 2000), which means that any disruption in the service quality is very difficult (if any) to compensate (Kachniewska, 2003). In the literature, there are the following types of risk arising from the purchase of services (Kachniewska, 2002):

- risk tied to the operation – how purchased service turns out in practice,
- physical risk – whether the service is safe for the health,
- financial risk – whether it is worth paying the costs,

- psychological risk – how it will affect my sense of dignity or image of me,
- social risk – how it affects my image in the eyes of my friends.

Therefore, the question is, what guides hotel guests in making consumer choices? It seems that before the selection of accommodation, hotel guests seek various forms and sources of information that promise the quality of services and confirm the credibility of the service provider. According to the research conducted by TNS OBOP and portal Casamundo.pl, in May 2012, entitled „Polish holiday customs” („Zwyczaje urlopowe Polaków”), while choosing accommodation, most consumers (52% respondents) are guided by the opinions of others (family, friends) or use the accommodation recommended by a trusted person. The second source of information about the hotel and its offer is the Internet (45% respondents). The network has many useful reviews and travel reports that are the inspiration for holiday travel. The Internet is used especially by younger people with higher education, who live in larger cities (Zwyczaje..., 2012). Internet search engines are the most commonly used online tool (73%) (Top referring..., 2011), through which an Internet user can find a website of a hotel or a reservation system. Mapping services are also becoming increasingly important (10%) (Top referring..., 2011), because they have maps that include the presentation of a variety of places for travelers, including hotels. Regardless of the Internet source of information, hotel business should be aware of the fact, that ultimately, an Internet user will verify the information directly on the hotel website. Actually, this should be the target of the hotels, to attract the largest number of potential customers to the hotel website and persuade them to book services this way.

It can be assumed, that in many cases, contact with the hotel website influences the first impression about the hotel facilities and services it offers. Impressions and feelings connected with the browsing the hotel website should be so intense and positive, that they could reduce the perceived risk of the quality and ensure the optimal level of services. Interesting and friendly designed hotel website can generate a new dimension of customers' experience and encourage purchase intentions of customers. It is worth mentioning that the hotel guests, in particular, are sensitive to kindness, reliability and responsiveness of the service provider, so the features which are heavily dependent on the human factor. This is due to the specific, very personal nature of the hotel services (Górska-Warsewicz and Świstak, 2009). Therefore, because of the fact that customers are interacting with hotel website (with the technology), not the service staff, it is suggested that the e-service system, should skillfully incorporate these crucial factors into the interaction with the website which influences customer's sense of individuality and respect.

Resuming, it has been noticed that the tasks of information technology in relation to previous years have been expanded (Budziewicz-Guźlecka, 2012). The role and meaning of Internet and modern technologies also in relation to customer service, were the aim of previous empirical studies in the hospitality field (e.g. Nawrocka and Oparka, 2008).

Customer satisfaction in the virtual environment and its marketing consequences

Quality of services is often considered in the context of the convergence of customer expectations towards the services with the actual feelings after its consumption (Marciszewska, 1997). The interpretation of the services quality as the relationship between customer's expectations and perceptions is often presented in the literature (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Rogoziński, 2000; Mazur, 2001; Redman and Mathews, 1998; Bloemer et al., 1999; Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Johnson and Mathews, 1997), including in respect of hotel services (Juwaheer and Ross, 2003; Ingram and Daskalakis, 1999; Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Tsang and Qu, 2000). Customer satisfaction

is closely linked with the concept of quality, because quality begins with the customer's needs, and ends with the customer's satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2002).

Satisfaction is defined as the degree to which the perceived characteristics of a product meets the expectations of the buyer (Kotler et al., 2002); it is a certain state of mind, a kind of emotion expressing the contentment of the purchase (Wilmańska-Sosnowska, 2001). If the features of the service do not meet the customers' expectations, it results in customer dissatisfaction, however, if services meet or exceed the customers' expectations, the customers are satisfied (Kotler et al., 2002; Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Pizam and Ellis, 1999). Moreover very satisfied customers will spread a favorable words of mouth by praising the organization and the service with which they are very pleased and can forgive when service failure happened (Asgari et al., 2012).

The literature emphasizes the overall customer's satisfaction is the result of all service encounters with the service provider, not just one, therefore e-satisfaction also contributes to overall satisfaction (Weber et al., 2005). The customer's e-experience – also the customer's website experience (Morrison et al., 2004) – is a part of the service experience (Weber et al., 2005).

Anderson and Srinivasan (2003: p. 125) defined e-satisfaction as „the contentment of the customer with respect to his or her prior purchasing experience with a given electronic commerce firm”.

Research shows that, website quality positively affects on e-satisfaction of the client, and therefore his purchase behavior (Bai et al., 2008; Vladimirov, 2012).

Mills and Morrison (2003) developed and positively tested the Model of Customer Satisfaction with Travel Website, contending that customer satisfaction should be the outcome of website evaluation (Morrison et al., 2004). The model showed that customer satisfaction is a direct result of the customers' experience at a travel website. This experience was seen as a multi-dimensional construction influenced by travel website interface, perceived quality of the services and products offered by the travel website and the perceived value of the website to the customer. Positive customers' website experience was expected to lead to higher levels of e-satisfaction with the website.

The Survey of Chinese on-line customers (data collected from the hotels properties in Shanghai) has shown, that website quality had a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction, and there is a positive relationship between customers' satisfaction and purchase intention and finally that the influence of website quality on purchase intention exists, and this relationship is mediated by customer satisfaction (Bai et al., 2008).

While studies made among German members of the chain's frequent guests program suggest that the more customers are satisfied with the website and e-service, the more likely they are to book via the website and recommend the website. The results also showed a positive and significant relationship between customers' e-satisfaction and e-loyalty (Weber et al., 2005). E-loyalty is defined as “customers favorable attitude and commitment toward the on-line retailer that results in repeat purchase behavior” and is perceived as bringing increased profitability to the on-line retailer because of long-time customer commitment (Wang, 2011: 5). Relationship quality in on-line context (e-relationship quality) includes two crucial dimensions: e-satisfaction (on-line satisfaction) and e-trust (on-line trust) (Asgari et al., 2012).

Virtual customers' satisfaction can lead to a change in their status from e-browsers (e-lookers) into e-buyers (e-bookers). One thing is certain, in order to function effectively in a virtual environment and achieve specific benefits hotel managers must focus their attention on effectively designed and attractive website. Optimally designed Website will be the source of new, unique e-users' emotions and sensations connected with the virtual contact with the organization, resulting with e-satisfaction leading to booking/purchase intention, website recommendation or repeated visits.

Note, however, that in assessing the quality of the hotel Website, perception of the customer plays a leading role. Website cannot be designed in isolation from the needs and expectations of the market. Customers, from their perspective, evaluate the effectiveness and the quality of the hotel Website, and this perception should be the most important for hotel managers, simultaneously being the starting point for any activities and initiatives in the field of website design and improvement.

Hotel managers should be therefore focused on the key and critical components of the Website, especially important and highly expected by the customers. These factors are also the specific moments of truth, having a significant impact on the experience with the virtual interaction with service provider. Keep in mind that the expectations towards virtual interactions can be differentiated by variables such as: demographic characteristics, life style, experience with other technology-based system, technology readiness and others (Bai et al., 2008). These features affect the perception of the quality and perceived value of the virtual interaction.

Reassuring, a new dimension of the pleasure connected with contact with the hotel Website and the involvement of the client in a virtual relationship is doubtless a key factor in building the competitiveness of today's hotel business.

The aim and justification of the research problem

The current system, amplifying the intensity of market competition in the hotel industry forces the need to look for more effective and better ways to distinguish on the hotel market. At the Internet age, the quality of the hotel Website, virtual relationships and their continuous improvement turns out to be an important area of competition.

Hotels trying to be oriented towards the needs and requirements of the virtual customers, should improve their product, designing a Website in order to provide e-visitors a unique experience of the virtual interaction. A well-designed website draws the attention and interest of the visitors, and also allows a better understanding of the product, leading to the desired attitude towards the company and its services. Website design seems to be a key factor when service providers cannot guide customers personally through the service experience, when customers serve themselves (Weber et al., 2005).

The purpose of the article is to identify the Websites leading traits and attributes which are relevant for customers' satisfaction with the virtual contact with a hotel.

The research problem is an attempt to answer the question of what a modern hotel Website should be like in order to provide satisfactory experience (e-experience) resulting from virtual interaction. Applied research methods is the critical analysis of the literature, including empirical studies and reports carried out in these issues.

Selected dimensions and characteristics of the hotel website quality — review of the literature

As shown above, the quality of the hotel site is the key to generating traffic and creating the desire to make a reservation. Quality website affects the purchase intentions of customers in the virtual environment through both perceived satisfaction with utility dimension and functionality of the site (Bai et al., 2008), both of them came to be of critical importance (Vladimirov, 2012).

But the question arises: what is the quality of your website and what it represents. In the literature, there is a fierce debate about the parameters of this quality. Most authors are trying to classify these differentiators in some groups, but are unable in this discussion to develop a common approach to the issue. The very recognition of that quality dimensions diverges authors. In the following part of the paper the opinions of the various researchers are examined.

Weber, Murphy, Schegg and Murphy (2005) in the study of building online guests satisfaction and loyalty suggests the following features of the site forming e-satisfaction: User Interface (**Design attractive**, Navigation easy, Speed), On-line Resources (Organization of content, Destination Information, Booking Information), Customer Confidence (Credit and security, Privacy, Brand), Relationship Service (E-mail response, Call Centre, Frequent buyer incentives, Interactivity, Customization language), Perceived Value (Rate guarantee, Convenience, Best Rate). But the most important, which is confirmed by these results appears to be User Interface, especially design attractive.

In turn, Morrison, Taylor and Douglas (2004) analyzing the evolution of the tourism and hotel websites show critical success factors in four perspectives: technical (currency of links, effective use of HTML, reciprocal hyperlinking, registration with search engines, short download time, traffic monitoring and analysis), marketing (positioning approach, marketing segmentation and target marketing, marketing research and database marketing, relationship marketing, partnership, tangibilizing of hotel services, marketing evaluation), internal (ease of site maintenance, schedule for site maintenance and updating, skills to maintain site) and customer (**attractiveness**, availability and reservations, content and organization, currency of information, interactivity, needs of special customer groups, response verification and speed, security of purchases and user friendliness).

Hashim, Murphy and Law (2007) carried out in their work a critical analysis of 17 articles from the years 1997–2005, on the subject of the diversity of dimension and features of the website quality. On this basis, they developed their own concept, which proposes five dimensions of quality: Information and Process, Value Added, Relationships, Trust, **Design** and Usability, 20 sub-dimensions and up to 74 website attributes of Hotel Website Quality.

Bai, Law and Wen (2008) studied the effect of the site quality on customer satisfaction and their purchase behavior. For the purposes of this study they have identified two major dimensions of quality hotel website, such as functionality and usability. Functionality reverse to the contents of the website, in other words it is information richness of a website, while usability relates to the website design, namely the degree of ease with which users can use a website. Among the features of website functionality can be distinguished: purchase information, service/product information, destination information, quality of information and contact information, while the usability of the site create: language, **layout and graphics**, information architecture, user interface and navigation and general.

Vladimirov (2012) in the study of customer satisfaction of visiting tourist websites listed ten characteristics that influence this satisfaction. He does not divide them into any groups, but lists sequentially: variety of online proposed tourism products and services, quality of the website information, **website playfulness**, website navigability, online responsiveness, online personalization of products and services, website confidence/trust, opportunities for e-transactions, variety of online proposed destinations in the country, variety of online proposed destinations abroad. The same author in his model identifies three customer reactions caused by customer e-satisfaction: overall satisfaction with the site, intention to revisit the site and likelihood to make purchase from the site. The results obtained from studies (Vladimirov, 2012) show that the most important factor in generating satisfaction among respondents is the website playfulness, defined by the author as the collection of features such as graphical style, attractive colours, the use of animation, sounds and music, zoom function, photo galleries, video presentations and using other media. Survey conducted by the author pays particular attention to the fact that depending on the expected by the hotel effects (the satisfaction with the site, intention to revisit the site, the interest in the hotel, likelihood to make a purchase from the site or different way), the hotel should focus on different attributes of the site.

Analyzing the components determining the quality of the site, Kim and Lee (2004) examined the six major dimensions of quality, such as: ease of use, usefulness, information content, security, responsiveness and

personalization. While Park and Gretzel (2007) have identified nine factors determining the success of a website and they are: information quality, ease of use, responsiveness, security/privacy, visual appearance, trust, interactivity, personalization, fulfillment and three factors relate to communication as: advertising/persuasion, playfulness and technology integration.

Summarizing, following the literature, there are many website characteristics such as (Nusair and Kandampully, 2008):

The Website Playfulness – greater joy and fun from visiting the site results in higher satisfaction, and this in turn increases the likelihood of revisit and possible purchase. This dimension may be relatively more important for the younger users of virtual space.

The Website Navigability – it is the determinant of good website functionality and impacts positively on B2C success. This seems to be the core construct of e-travel service quality, it increases customer trust and satisfaction which results in influencing on purchase intention. Moreover, on-line buyers were significantly more likely than on-line browsers to perceive user interface and navigation as being important.

Website Trust/Confidence – Customer purchase and re-purchase intention depend strongly on the level of satisfaction and trust towards the website. Whereas security problems are the major risks affecting on-line transaction, seen as a principal barriers to electronic commerce (Torres and Martins, 2004). Customers see online transactions as particularly risky and uncertain, especially because of the lack of interpersonal relationships and high prices of tourist services. It is also apparent that, even customers being in a frequent guest program, may noted concerns about security issues when providing credit card details (Weber et al., 2005). Lack of confidence is the main reason why e-visitors do not engage in online payments. However, building trust is a dynamic process based on the repetition of interactions, that increase customer confidence, reducing its uncertainty.

Quality of Information – Is a key component of the perceived quality of service, adequate and updated information on the site can attract and encourage customers to revisit the site. What is more, especially buyers (bookers) perceive the quality of the information significantly more than browsers (lookers). Too weak and poor content is one of the most important factors because of which visitors leave the site. It should be noted that the quality of information is not only accurate and current data, but also information optimally selected, which plays an important role in the era of information overload.

Personalization and responsiveness – Personalization page and quick response to your questions, tips and suggestions are key factors building customer loyalty. Personalized services, recommendations for registered users, easiness of asking questions, feedbacks and consumer opinions allow the website personnel to respond to customers' inquiries and establish of sustainable customer relationships.

The most important goal, which should put the hotel in the context of virtual business is to get potential customers to purchase services directly through the hotel website. Nowadays, at the time of rapidly developing indirect reservation channels (reservation systems, sites comparing prices and accommodation facilities, online travel agencies, etc.), it is essential for the hotel to care about customer satisfaction with reference to the features of the site incentives to make a purchase through this channel. Attributes that may affect the online shopping tourism products are (Vladimirov, 2012): secure payment methods, different price ranges for products/services and user-friendly system. However, Wong and Law (2005), studying online purchase intentions of tourists, identified nine attributes that lead travelers to shop online, and they are:

- necessary time for booking,
- visual attractiveness,
- linkage to other website,
- price information,
- useful information,
- number of hotel Web features,
- required time to search through the site,
- sensitive information,
- price competitiveness.

Jeong, Haemoon and Gregoire (2003) in the course of the study indicates that information satisfaction is a powerful determinant of behavioral intentions on the Web and that Website quality is an important antecedent of information satisfaction. They identified in their thesis five attributes of website service quality as major elements affecting website quality: useful website content, website convenience, accessibility, website security and **website design**.

Design of the hotel website as one of the key determinant of e-satisfaction

All cited works, studies and articles point out the variety of website quality features. However, at the same time it seems that in many cases (Weber et al., 2005; Morrison et al., 2004; Hashim et al., 2007; Bai et al., 2008; Vladimirov, 2012; Park and Gretzel, 2007; Nusair and Kandampully, 2008; Wong and Law, 2005; Jeong et al., 2003) a significant aspect is repeated. It relates to the visual design and is recognized as playfulness, aesthetic, design, attractiveness, appearance, layout, graphics, etc. Indeed, especially in the context of hotel services, in which the aesthetic value of the subject is extremely important, the e-experience with the hotel website should guarantee these positive impressions.

Contact service in a virtual environment is devoided of interpersonal relationships (between people), which are the particular source of emotions and feelings in a direct relationship service. In the virtual environment, especially at the beginning of the relationship with the company, experience with the hotel website, especially with its visuality is of strategic importance. There is suggested that the first impression of the website usually comes from the perception of its visual design (Wang, 2011). Good website design can affect whether e-visitors stay a while, book or shop on it (Rosen and Purinton, 2004). In addition, the research confirms, that the visitors usually decide whether they like the site or not in a split second (Lindgaard et al., 2006).

It turns out that when the same content is presented in two ways that differ in the level of aesthetics, the version with a higher level of aesthetics is judged to be more credible (Robbins and Holmes, 2008). The study also confirms the significant role of aesthetics of the site in the creation of the purchase intention, i.e. making reservations online (Wang, 2011). This aesthetics is defined by Wang (2011) as “the conscious designing of a web page to create certain effects – to produce pleasing, comfortable and positive emotional effect in the web page viewers” and understood in a slightly broader sense, as a combination of three factors: information design, visual design and navigation design (as the kind of bridge between information and visualization of website).

Information design refers to the way that information is presented, which allows customers to use or understand it with ease (Garret, 2002). Among the most important components of design information are the following: Button (text vs. image), Recording (color inconsistent vs. consistent), Classification (mix vs. hierarchy), Quantity of Picture, Quantity

of text, Social network link (ex. Facebook, Twitter), Multi-national language. These components largely contribute to the impression made on visitors to the site. In case of a hotel, it is extremely important to present the website in many languages. Wang (2011) even suggests to customize the content and layout of the site to the foreigners, as his research confirms that e-visitors have different aesthetic preferences conditioned by cultural differences.

Navigation design is defined as a way to find and move among different information and pages on the site, and it is determined by the menu system, the structure and layout of individual pages (Chaffey and Smith, 2011). Navigation design is defined by two issues: the method used to move/navigate on the site (hierarchy vs. network) and the type of website layout (horizontal vs. vertical). According to the studies (Wang, 2011) Internet users have their habits and strongly prefer hierarchical navigation and horizontal layout of the site.

But the first impression of a website is from its Visual design. Visual elements such as images, colours, symbols are the kinds of form of communication environment which target e-visitors. There are many visual web components, which are used to enhance the attractiveness of the information content of the site, and which create in a specific way, virtual experience of visiting the website. Sometimes the visual design is defined as visual communication, as with these elements of visuality the hotel communicates with e-visitors. The quality of communication depends therefore on the quality and characteristics of an appropriate adjustment to the visual preferences of e-visitors. Wang (2011) lists nine factors that create visual design: Radiating of color (warm vs. cold), Image of color (soft vs. strong), Font type, Font size, Position of photo (central vs. side), Width of home page, Length of home page, Background music and Animation of home page. Elements of space, use of images, size of images, use of animation and/or audio, number of words per line, color and size of characters are next of these factors (Rosen and Purinton, 2004).

Nowadays the website design consist of more animated graphics, images, interactive features, video, flash, background music which can influence on enjoyments and good mood, bring users a relax and comfortable feeling which influence on a positive e-experience. The possibility of animation through virtual environments, minimizing the absence of human contact and amusement associated to shopping (Torres and Martins, 2004).

Literature also shows that pictures play an important role in preparation of high quality website (Weber et al., 2005). Because of intangible nature of services and the fact that the appearance of the hotel for hotel guests is of great importance, and the potential client would like to see the hotel before booking, the images are very important to the hotel website. Also, Leong, Meng, Swee and Tham (1996) stated, that images are more memorable and easier than text for creating an image about products and services in customer's mind, pictures can help customers easily visualize the target product and service. According to Jeong and Choi (2004) different picture presentations on the Web can affect customers' behavioral intentions because picture perfectly represent the target's hotel overall image and product conditions. Pictorial presentation is crucial in promoting the object and creating the desired client mood, who, somehow "touches" future benefits. The study, which analyzed sites of New York hotels (in terms of pictorial presentation) showed, that content and realism of picture presentation are crucial predictors of customers' attitudes toward the website, and in turn, their attitudes were a strong predictor of behavioral intentions (Bai et al., 2008). Hoteliers must therefore liven up their site, effectively design layout and graphics pages, so that they become a significant magnet for virtual clients, who more and more look for information about accommodation and plan their travel just via the Internet.

Site, perceived as attractive by a potential customer, will keep him for a long time or make him a buyer, and consequently consumer of services – making his reservation or purchase on-line.

Website and its marketing significance in the hotel industry – implication for managers

The web environment and technology is constantly and dynamically changing, website are also in continuous state of evolution (Morrison et al., 2004). Dynamic expansion and changes in the virtual market require both perception and proactive attitudes of hotel managers. Observations and analysis of new developments and trends in the virtual world, should allow managers to anticipate certain scenarios, seeing them as opportunities and challenges to enhance hotel competitiveness in a virtual environment.

Hotels need to skillfully adjust the quality and value of their virtual offerings to the changing needs and preferences of the market on-line, taking into account the cultural difference, which may influence the perceived website quality (Vladimirov, 2012). It results from the fact that Internet-viewers are multi-culture, and therefore cultural differences must be taken under consideration. The results of empirical studies have shown that Internet visitors do have different website design preferences conditioned by different culture and then influence their customer behavior (Wang, 2011).

Nowadays the crucial goal of any hospitality activities is to emphasize the capabilities and potential of the hotel website during the virtual contact. Therefore, understanding the key features of the hotel Website, that generate customer satisfaction and resulting in desired purchase behavior and intentions, should be a priority and the current area of managerial attention.

Managers should remember that no single measure of their website attractiveness gives them reliable feedback, they should regular viewing a site from the customers' perspectives. Insufficient attention to the site design and search engine positioning greatly reduce perceived quality of the hotel website.

Hotels primarily use their sites to promote and sell their services, therefore evaluating the marketing effectiveness of the sites is needed (Morrison et al., 2004). It is significant and alarming, that Websites of many hotels for years remain unchanged, both in terms of navigation, information and visual. Some hotels have not changed their Website since the moment of their creation (Bieluszko, 2007). Meanwhile, both the hotel offer and Customers' preferences and needs are changing rapidly. But the most important fact is that the Internet dynamically changes itself and offers excellent opportunities for its users (customers and service providers). A growing number of virtual experiences shape and influence customers' virtual expectations and perceptions.

Conclusions

Summing up, hotel Website is characterized by incredibly dynamic changes (Piasta, 2007). The growing and sophisticated online customer expectations, cause that the hotel Website must be not only interactive, but first of all, proactive. Therefore a great stress should be put on its functionality and responsiveness. Taking into consideration the growing market competitiveness and customers' expectations, it seems that the key determinants of website quality today are information, navigation and visual design. It is suggested that hotel Website should be even ahead of its usability, functionality, design, providing customers with a unique virtual experiences and emotions creating during visiting the website. Otherwise, one thing seems to be certain, if the organization leaves its online customers - they will probably do the same (Jak zapewnić..., 2006).

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