

**Marketing of Tourism and Hospitality Products: Study of the impact of Celebrity
Endorsed Advertisements on Hospitality Products and Services**

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ABSTRACT

Tourism and hospitality industry like any other industry tries to put across its all the efforts for profit maximization and overall market leadership. Current Hospitality and Tourism industry is characterized by cut throat competition, new emerging markets, new opportunities, new challenges etc. Marketing of Tourism and Hospitality products require better strategies and techniques in the fast passed environment. In current scenario marketing strategies with faster response time is preferred by the marketers which has led to evolution of advertising and electronic media making the recent marketing tool very effective but only for the short term because in longer run these strategies don't sustain the organization mission and vision.

The research methodology adopted is based on the secondary data from the reliable sources along with well structured interviews and personal observations. For studying the effect of celebrity endorsed hospitality products and services around 40 guests were interviewed and 400 questionnaires distributed in Gujarat especially in hotels of Ahmadabad, Rajkot, Baroda and Surat. Out of all the 400 questionnaires distributed the well completed questionnaires ratio was 35% i.e. 140. The present study was conducted on the guests staying in hotels of Ahmadabad, Rajkot, Baroda and Surat to know the impact of various marketing techniques affecting the choice of the guests. The study attempts to find out the effect of celebrity endorsed hospitality products and services and also to estimate the amplitude of profitability which might be feasible due celebrity endorsement.

The study tries to understand the reasons of tourism upsurge in Gujarat due to recent promotional campaign and celebrity endorsement of Gujarat tourism by actor Amitabh Bacchan. The results revealed that celebrity endorsements also played a vital role in introducing either a faded away product or to generate curiosity and interest up to a fair extent in the Indian context as the domestic Tourism and Hospitality is a major pie in the overall Indian tourism and Hospitality. Study also tries to understand the other marketing styles in hospitality industry especially celebrity endorsed advertisements. Electronic Media like different websites, social networking sites like face book, twitter, advertising; sales promotion and the most recently flash marketing

or mob marketing has evolved as marketing tools of modern society. The dire need of the moment in Indian or state tourism and hospitality industry is to reach to the world and showcase its true potential.

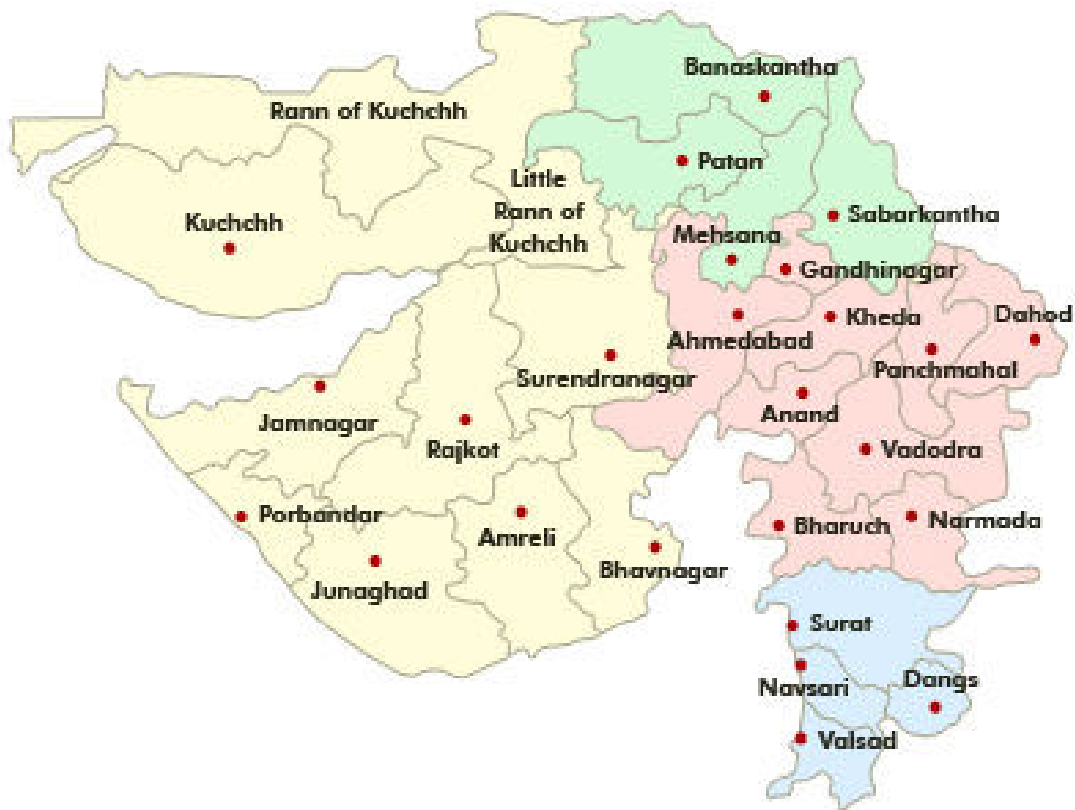
Keywords: Advertisement, Celebrity, Electronic Media, Endorsement, Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

Introduction

India is known for leisure tourism and leisure travel accounts for over 60 % of domestic travel. The areas and scope of Hospitality are ready to cross all the boundaries as per the earlier projections, estimates and the current Indian scenario, if properly fueled for propelling the future economic and other glamorous aspects of the country which is evident as per “World Travel and Tourism Council,” i.e. India will be a Tourism hotspot from 2009 to 2018, having the highest 10-year growth potential. According to the CII report The contribution of the entire travel and Tourism sector in India to Gross Domestic Product is estimated to rise from 8.6% (USD 117.9 billion) in 2010 to 9.0% (USD 330.1 billion) by 2020. Between 2010 and 2019 the demand for travel and Tourism in India is expected to grow annually by 8.2%, which will place India at the third position in the world. Travel and Tourism in India according to the same report also accounts for 49,086,000 jobs in 2010 (about 10% of total employment) and is expected to rise to 58,141,000 jobs (10.4% of total employment) by 2020. The Indian Hospitality industry, specially the Hotel, restaurant and fast food industry is one of the fastest growing and most important segments, revenue-wise as well as employment-wise. As per the latest statistics released by the Ministry of Tourism, the Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during the period January-November 2012 were 58.99 lakhs with a growth of 5.9 %, over the same period in 2011 , as compared to the FTAs of 55.72 lakhs with a growth of 9.4 % during January-November 2011 over the corresponding period of 2010. FTAs during the November 2012 were 6.90 lakhs as compared to FTAs of 6.70 lakhs during the same month in 2011 and 6.08 lakhs in November 2010. There has been a growth of three % in November 2012 over November 2011 as compared to a growth of 10.1 % that was registered in November 2011 over November 2010. According to the Key findings of CII, The Indian Hospitality sector is expected to witness high growth especially in

budget and mid segments, primarily driven by domestic travel and then any other formats of travel in Tire I Towns followed by Tire II Towns and hence is on the advantageous side.

The country's hospitality sector is poised to flourish in the long-run once it's backed up by the corresponding infrastructural backup by the government and the various tourism awareness and marketing programmes. The awareness campaign of Tourism and enhancement is extensively done by the state Govt.'s respectively as the advertisement and media campaigns like Hindustan ka dil dekho, for Madhya Pradesh, rejuvenating Kerala, "the gods own country" and the latest Khushboo Gujarat Ki' campaign by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd (TCGL), with Mr Bachchan specifying kuchh din to gujaro Gujarat me. The advertisement is pitched so perfectly to the layman that a television viewer gets attracted towards the advertisement and wishes to visit the place. Gujarat is a home to incredible diversity due to its geographic and strategic location. Its Gujarati pride and rich cultural heritage is reflected in the arts, music, literature, religious traditions, cuisine, fairs and festivals of every city and place. Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda, Rajkot are some major cities of Gujarat. Gandhinagar is the State Capital of Gujarat. Named after 'Gandhi', the father of the nation, it is situated 32 kms away from Ahmedabad and is proudly the best planned city in India. If you have a passion for good living, Gujarat is for you. If you wish for development and growth, Gujarat is for you. If you aim for "Vasudhaiya Kutumbakam", Gujarat is for you. Garba and Raas win the hearts of the tourists on one side and navratri celebration of Gujarat is known world over. Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, brand ambassador to Gujarat Tourism, has drawn many tourists to the western state in 2011-12, thanks to the fantastic heart touching advertisement and audio-visual media centering on the Bollywood star. As per data compiled by Gujarat Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization Ltd (GITCO), the number of tourists, who visited Gujarat during 2011-12, has gone up by 25 lakh to a total of 2.23 crore as against 1.98 crore tourists in 2010-11. After the launch of 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' campaign by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd (TCGL), with Mr Bachchan endorsing the state as a tourist destination, the total increase in the tourist arrival was placed at 54 lakhs.



Map- 1: Focused Study (Including the Current Status, Oppurtunities and Challenges)

Hotel marketing communications are either direct or indirect. The direct communications are through personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and direct mail. Indirect marketing communications for hotels include public relations and publicity, both of which may or may not forma part of the hotel’s marketing communication programme but may function independently. The major elements of the hotel communication mix thus are –mass media advertising, direct mail, sales promotion, public relations, and publicity. The impact of television is very important because of its vast potential as an audio-visual communicator. Electronic media advertisement enables the creative man to communicate by combining motion, sounds, words, color, personality and stage setting to communicate and display ideas to large and widely scattered audience. Electronic media advertisements usually play a role in either introducing a product, reinforcing the customer to purchase the product or avail the service at least for the first time and then when the product attribute is met with the customer’s need and requirements the advertisements further reinforces the customer to stick to it. Rana (1995) expressed that among

the various media, the impact of television advertisement on social behavior, including purchasing behavior was the greatest. McCracken (1989) found that the use of celebrity endorsers stand for an effective way of transferring meaning to brands as it is believed that celebrity endorsers bring their own emblematic meaning to the endorsement process and that this cultural meaning residing in the celebrity is passed on to the product which in turn is passed on to the consumer. Though there are contrary views too for the celebrity endorsed products citing different marketing aspects but still around 85-90% of the products and services are hooked with a celebrity to make it popular. Celebrities are really good at generating attention, positive buying attitude and behavior and finally a brand. Advertising influence the prospective hospitality customers as it develop interests by showcasing the quality of the hospitality product or service better than others. It persuades guests to at least try the hospitality product or service once and then the repeated advertisements also persuade the guests to stick to the same products and services. Celebrity endorsed Television advertisement works on AIDA MODEL where the advertisements for a hospitality product or service seek customer attention, creates interest and then a desire to obtain the hospitality product or avail the hospitality service which finally customer decides to take action and avail the Hospitality products and service. Celebrities endorsing brands has been steadily increasing over the past years due to the increasing demand of the celebrity endorsed products in the market by the customers. Understanding the need and demand accordingly, marketers harness the maximized profits by utilizing the power, fan line-up and various attributes of celebrities in influencing consumer-purchasing decisions. Celebrity endorsed Television advertisement for a hospitality product or service employs attention creating interest or a desire to obtain the hospitality product or avail the hospitality service. The impact of the advertisements is more on television than the print media or radio. As believed in case of Gujarat Tourism, the credit majorly goes to the well encased advertisement for the public emphasising on the bundled benefits which Gujarat tourism has to offer to its tourists.

Aristotle's quoted, "Any brand can get a celebrity.

That is easy.

But getting a celebrity consistent with the right brand, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way...

That is not easy."

In advertising, an hotelier is dealing with a non-personal contact with the target audience, unlike sales promotion where the hotelier is aware of the identity of the target. The purpose of advertising is indeed the same as the purpose of communication – it aims to inform and persuade the consumer or the travel trade to change, to influence their attitude towards the advertiser's product or organization. Effective advertising not only gains the attention of the prospective guest, advertising will be the first introduction of the area, location and the hotel itself. The success of this introduction will invariably depend upon the impressions made. Further, to meet the competition, effective advertising must stand out as superior to competing advertisements, which, in turn, need an effective advertising campaign. Therefore, the advertising campaign should be planned carefully and well in advance. The rationale behind identifying the target audiences and creating proper message is that there is a need to differentiate marketing communication or advertising approach to different target audiences. The objectives of advertising in hotel industry vary from image building to immediate sale. e.g To increase sales, To create awareness or interest in 'Facilities/services available', To create awareness or interest in 'Benefits to be gained by patronizing hotel': – To create awareness or interest in 'Versatile advantage of hotel', To educate guests/customers on, To create favorable image of hotel and even To counter wrong impression created by Competitors or media effectively.

Advertisement according to American marketing association is any announcement or persuasive message placed in the mass media in paid or donated time or space by an identified individual, company, or organization. According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia: - Techniques and practices used to bring products, services, opinions, or a cause to public notice for the purpose of persuading the public to respond in a certain way is called advertising. Most advertising promotes goods for sale, but similar methods are used in public service messages to promote causes, charities, or political candidates. In many countries, advertising is the most important source of income for the media through which it is conducted. In addition to newspapers, magazines, and broadcast media, advertising media include direct mail (direct-mail marketing), billboards and posters, transit advertising, the Internet, and promotional items such as matchbooks or calendars. 'Advertising seen is measured by looking at 'impacts.' Impacts provide a measure of advertising exposure. One impact is equivalent to one member of the target audience viewing one commercial spot. Celebrity endorsements started probably from 80's for consumer products like Tabassum (Prestige pressure cookers), Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), Kapil

Dev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Suitings) etc where TV stars and sportspersons endorsed prominent brands. Today, celebrity endorsements can be seen from a basic consumer product Thanda matlab Coca Cola by Aamir Khan to a highly elite product like diamond “Nakshatra” by sensuous Aishwarya. Some of the researchers also have shown the other faces of the celebrity endorsements where these days a celebrity endorses more than 10-15 products and hence the question arises many times that is the celebrity really using the product himself or is he aware of its characteristics. As Cooper (1984) states in his study, “the product, not the celebrity, must be the star”. Similarly another problem is celebrity greed and overexposure, when a celebrity becomes an endorser for many diverse products. Another very prominent drawback of celebrity endorsements is the „Vampire Effect or the celebrity overshadowing the brand (Kulkarni and Gaulkar, 2005). This happens when the audience forgets the brand advertised and concentrates more on the celebrity endorsing the brand. Agrawal (1995) recommend that there are decreasing returns associated with celebrities in advertising. Also some consumers have termed celebrities to be a ‘puppet’ used by companies implying that they perceive the celebrities to be lying, when endorsing certain products but as the celebrity endorsed products here in this study is not a consumer product but here the product is a hospitality and tourism product dealing with an intangible thing i.e customer satisfaction, feelings and sentiments. Akpınar, 2003; Whelan, 2004; Carvão, 2008; Yeoman, 2008 specified the Individual trends also affect preferred tourism type and the demand profile as a whole. The factors affecting the tourism create new tourists. “new tourist” look for more learning, adventure–looking for real experiences, are more flexible and independent in nature, are interested in sustainability, they even are willing to pay more for new places of scenic beauty, heritage culture etc.

Literature Review

Individual trends also affect preferred tourism type and the demand profile as a whole. One of the factors affecting the tourism demand is the change in the demand profile of consumers and hence creating new tourists. The change is so implicit that they are given a name of “new tourist” and their characteristics may be summarized as follows (Akpınar, 2003; Whelan, 2004; Carvão, 2008; Yeoman, 2008):

Agrawal (1995) recommend that there are decreasing returns associated with celebrities in advertising. Also some consumers have termed celebrities to be a 'puppet' used by companies implying that they perceive the celebrities to be lying, when endorsing certain products.

According to (Weber & Ladkin, 2004) the trend toward relationship marketing in getting popular. One-to-one marketing involves long-term commitment, travel packages can be tied to strategic alliances, joint ventures, and vendor partnering as effective marketing strategies (Vippoman, 2006; Vermeluer & Seegers, 2009) stressed that Since there is a change in the way that tourism destination and hotels are presented and marketed to travelers, the application of consumer-led, online travel advice, online chat rooms, online hotel rating systems, online hotel consumer reviews are increasing. In addition hospitality firms may choose some type of free social network such as LinkedIn, Face book and Twitter for promotion tools.

To apply all aspects of push and pull strategies. (Guler, 2009: 246-247).

Dhillon (1997) investigated the factors affecting consumer behavior of durable goods and food items. It was found that, the rural respondents gave primary importance to advertisements through radio and posters but were least affected by magazines. On the other side, Urban respondents were affected the maximum by television and magazines.

Using quality management systems, certification and communicate this application to target markets (Scafarto, et.al., 2006)

Vermeluer I.E. & Seegers, D. (2009), "The Impact of Online Hotel Reviews on Consumer Consideration", *Tourism Management*, 30, (1): 123-127

Rana (1995) expressed that among the various media, the impact of television advertisement on social behavior, including purchasing behavior was the greatest.

Vampire Effect or the celebrity overshadowing the brand. (Kulkarni and Gaulkar, 2005).

Objectives

1. To study various marketing styles used by Hospitality and Tourism Industry.
2. To study the latest techniques used by the Tourism and Hospitality industry for marketing its products and services in highly competitive and technological environment.
3. To study the impact of celebrity endorsed advertisement on Tourism and Hospitality products.
4. To study how celebrity endorsed advertisements can act as a better strategy for marketing Tourism and Hospitality products.

Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted is based on the secondary data from the reliable sources along with well structured interviews and personal observations. For studying the effect of celebrity endorsed hospitality products and services around 40 guests were interviewed in Gujarat especially in hotels of Ahmadabad, Rajkot, Baroda and surat. The guests were also given the questionnaires and around 400 questionnaires were given to the guest personally but only 140 completely filled questionnaires were received and out of which 35 questionnaires were randomly selected for analysis. The present study was conducted on the guests staying in hotels of Ahmadabad, Rajkot, Baroda and surat to know the impact of various marketing techniques affecting the choice of the guests. The study attempts to find out the effect of celebrity endorsed hospitality products and services and also to estimate the amplitude of profitability which might be feasible due celebrity endorsement.

Analysis

Current cut throat hospitality market situation indicates that celebrity endorsed advertising can, indeed justify the high costs associated with this form of advertising i.e. probably the economic advantage, generate extensive PR leverage for brands etc. A main challenge for tourism establishments' marketing efforts lies in the increasing diversification of interests, tastes, and demands of tourists. Therefore, hotels need to keep up the trends, learn about the change in the tourist profiles, and be increasingly innovative in product and market development and beliefs of the tourists (Yeoman, 2008: 39).

Analysis of the Questionnaire asked to guest staying in hotels of Gujarat from Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Baroda and surat.

From where did you get information about Gujarat Tourism made you come to Gujarat?

Website	Tour And Travel Operators	Family & Friends	Television Advertisements	Others
05	05	08	15	2

You have come to Gujarat to

Visit As A Tourist	Business Trip	Meet Friends and Relatives	Any Occasion or Ceremony	Others
15	05	04	05	06

Your decision to visit Gujarat if depended on Amitabh Bacchan's endorsed Gujarat tourism advertisement; it was to what %age

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
02	03	14	14	02

Will you prefer to turn up again in Gujarat in future? Yes /no /may be

Definitely	Yes	May Be	No /Situational	Never
15	10	04	04	02

Amitabh Bacchan's AD on Gujarat tourism has made more tourists pour in the state.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	10	05	04	02

You find Gujarat full of tourist places.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	13	04	03	03

Gujarat tourism is fulfilling all its promises as endorsed by Amitabh Bacchan.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	13	05	04	01

Amitabh Bacchan's Personality and honesty has been factors in promoting Gujarat tourism

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	12	07	04	02

Amitabh Bacchan's own image and huge fan lineup are influencing television viewers to visit Gujarat.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
09	15	06	04	01

Such celebrity endorsements can work as a strategy to promote tourism in other states of India as well

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	13	05	04	01

"reliability of celebrity," "trust on celebrity" will also influence and affect such tourism endorsements in future

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	11	04	04	04

“Age, sex, beauty” etc of celebrity endorsing a hospitality product or service will enhance the tourism value of the state.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
06	12	07	05	05

A celebrity’s tarnished image can suppress the state tourism’s image.

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	10	05	04	01

There is a positive impact of physically attractive models on advertising

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	10	05	04	04

Advantages of a Celebrity Endorsement in Hospitality Industry

1. Hospitality Brands can leverage celebrity name and fame for long time in their stride and hence celebrities create high PR coverage for a firm.
2. Celebrities sometimes mitigate a tarnished image of the firm.
3. Some stars like Amitabh Bacchan, Sachin Tendulkar etc who have a universal appeal and acknowledgement by the public prove to be a good bet as their brand ambassadors and to generate interest among the masses. These type of celebrities are also the best bet for the advertisers to Rejuvenating a stagnant brand.
4. Celebrities are loved and adored by their fans and so the advertisement agencies use these celebrities to capitalize on these feelings and to sway the fans towards their brand.
5. If a star fosters a brand he directly endorses his trust for that brand among the target audience and hence establishes credibility.
6. A celebrity’s preference for a brand gives out a persuasive message - that if celebrity is benefiting from the brand, the consumer will also benefit.
7. Celebrities ensure attention of the target group by breaking the clutter of advertisements and making the ad and the brand more noticeable.
8. Different stars appeal differently to various demographic segments (age, gender, class, geography etc. so the advertisers try to correlate that brand accordingly.

Disadvantages of a Celebrity Endorsing a Brand

1. If the image of a celebrity gets eroded or deteriorated due to one or the other reason, then all the items endorsed by the celebrity are considered as inferior. Celebrity endorsers may at times become liabilities to the brands they endorse.
2. The issue of a celebrity overshadowing the brand is called the vampire effect which though is not a matter of concern in hospitality industry probably.
3. The advertisers must be careful in choosing a celebrity because If there is no congruency between the celebrity and the brand, then the audience will remember the celebrity and not the brand.
4. Celebrity chosen as the attribute of the product:-Example, MRF was among the early sponsors of Tendulkar with its logo emblazoned on his bat.
5. There is always a meaning behind a commercial or an advertisement which must reach clearly to the public. Preferably it must be straight or just twisted rather than highly complex requiring higher understanding and common sense E.g. The Castrol commercial featuring Rahul Dravid.
6. Inconsistency in the professional popularity of the celebrity: The celebrity may lose his or her popularity due to some lapse in professional performances. For example, when Tendulkar went through a prolonged lean patch recently, the inevitable question that cropped up in corporate circles - is he actually worth it?
7. Celebrities endorsing one brand and using another (competitor): A similar case happened with Britney Spears who endorsed one cola brand and was repeatedly caught drinking another brand of cola on tape.

Conclusion

Future Marketing Strategies of Hospitality

1. Use innovative marketing strategies to improve their revenue and to face Market competition
2. Identify major competitors such identification of major competitors would enable the firm to offer its appropriately designed marketing mix in order to attained the objectives of the firm.
3. To identify the market segmentations a well defined marketing strategy clearly describes whom (customers and markets) to serve and whom to exclude. Also what to serve (product and services) and what to serve (which products or services to avoid or stop serving).

4. To minimize risk due to changes in competitor's strategies, changes in technology, changes in product and services changes in consumers like and dislikes.
5. To identify the competitive advantage on which strength of the firm can enjoy competitive differences like Product Superiority, Services Superiority, and Distribution Network etc.

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