

A similarity of the marketing methods of two multinational hotel chains

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Hospitality marketing is about setting strategies to engage with the target market and using methods and tools to implement strategies that will help build a good customer relationship. The success of a business in the hotel industry depends on how effectively the company can engage with the customers and caters to their specific needs and wants. This report will analyze those important marketing issues by comparing and contrasting two multinational hotel chains: Marriott International and Premier Inn. Marriott International is based in the USA which has 30 different brands in over 131 countries (marriott.com, 2021). Premier Inn, is a Britain based hotel chain with more than 800 hotels. It is the largest hotel chain in the UK (Whitbread PLC, 2021). The marketing methods of these two hotels are quite different given the size, geographical presence, market share, and business vision.

The first thing to understand the different marketing methods of these two MNCs is to analyze their marketing mix elements. The four elements are analyzed by me covering the current aspects and changes they have made recently due to the changes in the industry ecosystem.

Product/ Service: The two hotel chains offer exquisite rooms and suites along with dining rooms serving continental and exotic culinary products. Marriott Hotel offers several kinds of rooms that cater to the needs and expectations of its customers. The pandemic has changed the course of events for the hotel chain and a shift has occurred in the service section. Now, there is major health precautions in the hotel. The hotel's services are quite different from previous times. The hotel will market its products differently after the pandemic. Premier Inn will also bring an extension to its hotel room by adding luxury rooms to attract high-end customers (premierinn.com, 2021).

Place: Marriott International and Premier Inn are located across several countries around the world. Marriott is concentrated in the North American region along with its presence in Asia and Europe. Premier Inn on the other hand is mainly located in Europe, in the UK. The guests of this hotel chain can receive their services by booking through the website or other third-party booking agencies. Marriott has a mobile app that is convenient for booking and check-in and check-out. Furthermore, nowadays social media has become an excellent point to engage with customers.

Price: Marriott International price its products based on its brand category. The price of the economy rooms is quite reasonable while those of the luxury brands are based on value-added pricing which ensures that customers pay for the value they are getting from the hotel. The prices range from \$100

per night to \$500 per night. The suites are rather of higher price starting from \$400 to \$1000. Premier Inn has hotels of more affordable prices (Marriott International, 2021). The rooms can accommodate customers who are on a budget. However, the hotel also has a high-end room which is for customers who wish to have a rather luxurious experience at the hotel.

Promotion: The two hotels do their promotional works both conventionally and digitally. Marriott promotes the hotel chain through international sports events such as soccer and cricket. The hotel has several celebrity endorsements which help the hotel reach the public. Premier Inn, however, promotes in a more mass manner such as television advertisement (Srivastava, 2019). The hotel's main target market is those with medium income class. Therefore, it mainly promotes in such events where these customers are readily found. Social Media Advertising has gained popularity in the hospitality industry. Marriott and Premier Inn also have a high presence on social media through which the two hotels reach the millennials and other customers.

Marriott International and Premier Inn have unique ways of classifying their brands. Marriott has several types of brands while Premier Inn does not have such classes. Marriott has five types of brands which include Luxury, Premium, Select, Longer Stays, and Collections (marriott.com, 2021). All these brands are subclassified in two parts- Distinctive and Classic. Some of its Luxury Classic hotels are The Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, and JW Marriott, and some of the Distinctive Classic hotels are Ritz-Carlton Reserve, The Luxury Collection, W Hotels, and Edition (marriott.com, 2021). All these brands serve the catered needs of the market and have established the brand name for Marriott International. Unlike Marriott, Premier Inn is a small hotel chain. There are three different brands. Premier Inn, Hub, and ZIP. Premier Inn has over 800 hotels across the UK and several other countries which offer comfy king-size Hypnos beds for the guests. There are only 12 Hub hotels of the brand which offer small rooms but they are smart, stylish and can be found across London and Edinburgh at affordable prices (KOTLER, 2020). ZIP offers the most economical type of room at £19 a night and is now open in Cardiff.

Marriott International and Premier Inn are highly different from the point of view of the customers they serve. The former has a family-focused service orientation targeting the high-end customers while the latter targets mainly cover economy class customers. Marriott, however, recently also focused on youngsters who are entering the market in large numbers. The needs and expectations of the youngster are different from the older generation (Dev, 2019). A major strategic shift in the market segmentation was required for both these firms. Premier Inn is highly focused on serving at an affordable rate and it also taking new strategies to attract high-end customers to enhance its revenue streams (O'Fallon and Rutherford, 2020).

Customer engagement has become a crucial issue in the marketing spectrum of the current industry. To connect with the customers, the hotel must know the specific requirements of the customers so that services can be customized based on that. Marriott International's policy for customer engagement is to appoint its customer service employees (Dev, 2019). The customer service department maintains communication with the guests regarding offers and stays at the hotel and how their support for the hotel is well appreciated. Other than that, Marriott offers its long-term customers several benefits so that they remain with the service for a long time. Premier Inn also has a good PR team that caters to the requirements of the customers if required. The team engages with the customers regularly to get to know their needs and requirements.

Digital marketing has become a crucial part of the hospitality market. Hotels are using this marketing tool extensively because of its efficiency and effectiveness. Through digital marketing, Marriott International engages with the customer (Plunkett and Plunkett, 2021). It has a digital marketing team that is responsible for the continuous development of its website, mobile app, and social media presence. Through these platforms, the hotel chain communicates its offers to existing and potential customers. The platforms have good traffic because of the regular customer visit (Stoffers, et al., 2021). As a part of attracting the youngsters, Marriott uses this tool because this particular market is easily reaching through this. The use of digital marketing is similarly observed in Premier Inn as well, however, to a lesser extent. Due to the pandemic, the use of digital marketing has become extremely important.

Environmental sustainability is one of the most-talked issues in the whole business world. It is assumed that the hospitality industry alone contributes to 15% of global pollution. Therefore, it has become significantly important for hotels to resolve this dilemma. Marriott International follows the Paris Climate Act and SDG principles by the UN for its sustainability practice (Sheppardson, 2020). Due to the smaller scale of business of Premier Inn, its participation in environmental sustainability is less observed. However, the hotel chain conforms to all sorts of environmental regulations based on the EU.

The pandemic has changed the course of many businesses. Marriott International and Premier, both were hit hard due to the pandemic as it brought the whole industry to a stop. In many locations, the hotels were shut down for more than six months and some went out of business due to financial crisis. However, as the pandemic started to cool down, the hotels started to come back on track. But a significant shift was brought during this time (Hugo, 2021). The whole hospitality industry had to go through operations particularly health and cleanliness changes due to health concerns. Marriott International's "Cleanliness and Hazard Management" team brought in new policies to make sure that the hotels are safe for receiving the guests. Some changes include hotel entrance and reception, room cleaning, dining room policies (Altuntas and Gok, 2021). Premier Inn also brought significant changes into the business by employing new safety protocols in the business. These messages were

communicated with the prospective and existing customers to make sure that customers feel safe when they will come back to the hotel (Singh, 2020).

In the end, it can be said that hospitality marketing has been going through major shifts due to the pandemic. The fundamental also had to change due to new health protocols that hotels will have to follow. Though some previous marketing methods are still being used by the organization, there will be a major addition to the way hotels will and are serving the customers (Barrows, 2019). Marriott International is a large hotel chain and its marketing policies have been able to make the business survive for a long time. However, its hotel chain also had to make significant changes in its operations as marketing policies to address the health crisis across the world.

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