

E Class Railway stations Revenue Hike and development Strategy in Kerala

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Abstract In the present, all small railway stations in Trivandrum & Palakkad divisions of Kerala state need some more exposure and development for the enhancement of the transportation system in the rural area. In this journal paper, the author has applied the theory of Marketing Management in the area of Small railway station up gradation. We have discussed how pull system of Marketing can be applied in the Small railway station to attract more passengers in the railway stations. In this paper, the author has done a case study in Pudukad Railway station which comes under E class category under Trivandrum division of Kerala state

Introduction

Pudukad Railway station is an E class railway station under Trivandrum division of Kerala state. Three Express trains, one fast passenger and the remaining whole passenger trains have stoppage here. Still the station comes under small revenue category under railways. The train passengers association and nearby local people have worked out a strategy for the revenue hike and development of this station which can be a role model for the remaining E Class station. Here they treat railway station as a Product and have done some research on this Product in the passengers market.

Marketing is a widely used term to describe the means of communication between the company and the consumer audience. Marketing is the adaptation of the commercial activities and use of institutions by the organizations with a purpose to induce behavioral change on a short-term or permanent basis. Market research, which includes social and opinion research, is the systematic gathering and interpretation of information about individuals or organizations using statistical and analytical methods and techniques of the applied social sciences to gain insight or support decision making.

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1. Marketing Research for the station in Local area

Pudukad Railway station is situated 1.5 km away from Pudukad town which is situated in the National highway. It is the only station in Pudukad assembly constituency which include 8 Pachayath. The Train Passengers association of Pudukad started a research in the inner and outer areas of this constituency for the feedback from the local people.

1. a) Using Market Research for Railway station Development

"New" is one of the strongest words in marketing. "New" invokes the belief that something is moving forward, that it is different, modern or improved. People are attracted to new

products like a magnet. Introducing new products on a constant basis is the best way to get attention and is invaluable publicity for a business. "New" positions a company as being dynamic and forward looking. Companies such as 3M and Sony have held this slot for periods of time but it is difficult to stay there. Innovation is hard work and the road is paved with failures.

Here, the Train Passengers Association has prepared

leaflets and distributed then through panchayath members, kudumbasree people and other local organisations. The leaflets contain questionnaire which includes why the people do not come to Pudukad station for journey etc. From the feedback system, association members understood the reasons for the poor collection in Pudukad station. The feedback from the local people is as follows:

1. We don't know the train timings of Pudukad station
2. We don't know the exact location of Pudukad station
3. The facilities in the station are very poor
4. We don't know much more about train journey
5. We don't know the system follows in rail journey

2. Market Oriented strategic Planning

Train Passengers association Pudukad prepared a strategic planning according to the feedback from the research activities for the increase of revenue from Pudukad station. In the month of January 2014, the average revenue was Rs 4500 per day Rs 2.3 lakhs per month. Train Passengers Association Pudukad prepared the following strategic planning process

1. Awareness of Train timing from Pudukad station in Pudukad assembly constituency
2. Awareness Advantage of rail journey in the mind of local people
3. More programs to attract more people towards Pudukad station
4. Transportation system from Pudukad station to the nearby villages

5. Participation of Railway higher authorities in the activities of Pudukad railway station development.

6. Request support from local Member of Parliament, Member of legislative assembly constituency, panchayath president and all other important people for the railway station development

7. Awareness of the advantage of taking season ticket in the mind of daily train passengers.

8. Some sponsorship from the local people and other organizations for installing basic amenities in the railway station

9. Request to Railway higher authorities for new facilities according to the feedback from the local people and daily passengers in the constituency

2. a) Awareness of train timings in the mind of local people in the constituency

This is an important step for the revenue hike and station development. From the station there are up and down 18 trains for the journey. Train Passengers association cannot conduct awareness campaigns individually. Here they conducted campaign in association with official organizations in the college and school level such as National Service Scheme, National cadet corps, etc. National Service Scheme students get a benefit of social service, at the same time their personality in the interaction will develop. Also other panchayath authorities and organization will support campaign.

50 Volunteers of National Service Scheme have taken this challenge in association with Train Passengers association Pudukad. As part of NSS Annual Special camp 50 volunteers accepted this campaign. In the initial stage students were given training for interaction with local people and importance of Pudukad station. In the training session one person from railway authorities and one from

train Passengers association

have taken session about use of Rail Journey ,advantage of rail Journey and train timings from the concerned station.

Then students are divided into different groups and each group covered all the houses and government offices. Each group is guided by a member of Train Passengers

association & Member of concerned ward of Pachayath. Train Passengers association prepared leaflets about Train Timings from Pudukad station for the campaign. Students covered three nearby Pachayaths in the Campaign work. Divisional railway Manager Sunil Bajpai,IRS inaugurated the program and interacted with the students.

The whole social medias and other newspapers treated it as a sensational news and get more coverage rather than they expected. Association members and other local people have spread this activity in whole social media like facebook,twitter etc.At the end of the campaign local people also noticed Pudukad railway station.The number of passengers increased to 800 per day.Also some more hike in the revenue from 4500 to 8000 Rs per day occurred

2. b) Installation of Train Timing Board in the important bus stop and major shops in the constituency.

Train Passengers Association members installed eco friendly display boards in the major bus stops and shops in the constituency. This helped in the way that more passengers are being attracted to the Railway station. Also Taxi drivers and auto drivers will get awareness about

Pudukad railway station, since they are mostly used by passengers who will be diverted to our concerned railway station.

2. c) Awareness advantage of rail journey in the mind of local people

In this step the passenger will get a clear idea about rail journey. Here train passengers association prepared a brochure about advantages of Rail journey. Also the association has arranged more session for local passengers about services offered by railways.

2. c) Conducted more programs in the Railway station in association with railways

This is also one of the important aspects of railway station reach in the mind of people. Train Passengers association conducted several flag ship programs and awareness programs in the railway station. For each program they invited all the important persons and other local people to the station. It is also a chance to expose the concerned station. Also people will get an idea about the location, train details and facilities in the station.In Pudukad station association organized swachabharath abhiya cleaning drive, Train safety awareness program in association with railways and other local people.As a result the locals talk about the station and spread the news of facilities & train timings. The main important thing in the program is the participation of the local people and railway authorities. The invitation for the program was prepared before the program has started. It will be send the people through hard copy or soft copy. Also social medias like twitter, face book play an important role for the successful of every programs. Each members of Pudukad train passengers spread this program news in their locality and other social medias. This will attract more people in the concerned

railway station.

2. d) Transportation system for the Railway station

This is also very important thing for the railway station improvement. The passengers from whole area of the constituency should have proper conveyance to the station. Train Passengers association Pudukad has done awareness campaign for the bus conductors passing through the main gate near to Pudukad railway station. ,they have erected some display board in buses for the proper understanding of the location of the station. Also whole the main junction in the constituency should have a board containing the directions of the station. Auto or Taxi facility could be available at the station for the proper convenience of the passenger

2. e) Participation of the railway authorities in the program

This is for the support of the railways for the station. In Pudukad, divisional railway manager visited the station. He opened a new waiting hall for the passengers and also sends a budget for the platform rise. This will enhance the station development. This type of interaction with authorities enhance station development and thereby revenue.

2. f) Request to the local Member of Parliament, member of assembly constituency for the railway station development

In Pudukad Railway station train passengers association have submitted memorandum about Pudukad Railway station development. This will be more useful for the awareness of the station to the concerned MPs & MLAs.

2. g) Advantage of taking season Ticket

This awareness will increase the number of season ticket holders in trains. In Pudukad Train Passengers association

have prepared leaflets with prices of taking season tickets and advantages. This will increase the revenue of the station.

2. h) Sponsorship from the local people

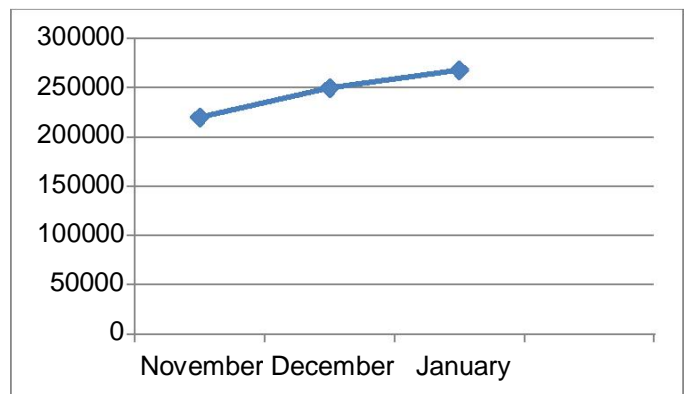
This will enhance more attraction to the station. In Pudukad association have sent request to whole people and organization for the basic amenities .They got six set of chairs as sponsorships.

2. i) Tourism Package

All the local tourist places can be enhanced through Railway station. Chimmany wild life sanctuary and arattupuzha temple are the most attractive places nearby Pudukad station .By the installation of direction board in the railway station will enhance more people will reach the concerned tourist places through rail Journey.

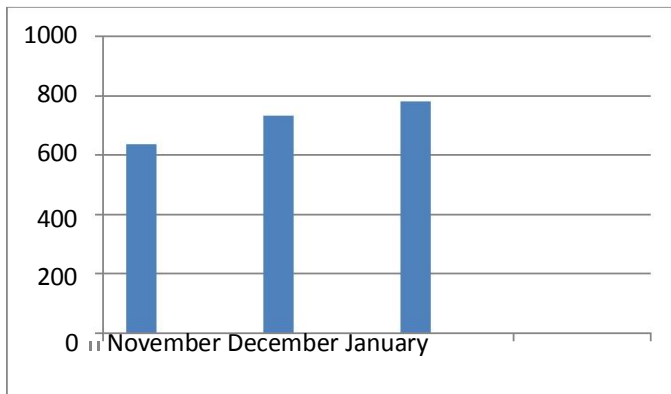
The above methods in Pudukad Railway station increased the revenue through 50,000 per month.

Fig 1 Revenue Hike status of the station



Graph show the hike in the revenue of Pudukad station after the campaign and the above activities.

Number of Passenger hike status of the station



The above diagram will give a clear picture about the number of passengers in Pudukad Railway station

3. Conclusion

The above case study for an E class Railway station revenue hike strategy will be utilized for whole E & F class category Railway station in the Kerala state. Proper Marketing Pull system is used in the above case study. Here we treated railway station as a Product and made some strategy for the development. Since development of the station is related to the revenue, it's also an important parameter in the development of the station.

4. Acknowledgment

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