

# THE USAGE OF ICT ON HOTEL PROMOTION.

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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the usage of Information Communication on Hotel Promotion. The key attention is focused on the ICT application importance for the promotion of a Hotel. The paper emphasises on the Hotel Industry in one of the most popular tourist destinations in Rwanda. Northern Province, Musanze District, Volcanoes National Park.

Our findings show that the most of hotels use ICT in their daily activities. Their staff are deeply aware of the ICT and its importance in the Promotion. The well-known importance is that it helps to improve the quality of service and speeding. But somehow, the level of ICT usage in hotel promotion is not on high level as it should be. It seems that there are some issues to handle.

Key words: Information and communication technology, Hotel Promotion, Tourism, Hospitality, advertising, publicity, internet, computers, hardware and software.

## **Introduction**

Information Communication Technologies and the internet introduced a second industrial revolution in the late 1990s. The development and application of computerized systems accelerated rapidly and enabled their use for a wider range of business functions and activities. The enhancements in ICT capabilities, in combination with the decrease of the size of equipment and ICT costs, improved the reliability, compatibility and inter-connectivity of numerous terminals and applications (Gupta, 2000). The emergence and mainstreaming of the internet empowered the global networking of computers, enabling individuals and organizations to access a plethora of multimedia information and knowledge sources, regardless of their location or ownership, often free of charge. Thus, almost everybody with an internet access (which, sadly, is still only about 16.6% of the global population in 2007) can effectively access unprecedented levels of information and knowledge. Interestingly worldwide internet users reached 1.1 billion in 2007, with the USA leading with 210 million internet users and a penetration level of 70% whilst China followed with 132 million users but only 10% penetration ([WWW.internetworldstats.com](http://WWW.internetworldstats.com)).

Since the beginning of the century the development of ICTs has had a major effect on the operation, structure and strategy of organizations. Not only do they reduce both communication and operational costs, but they also enhance flexibility, interactivity, efficiency, productivity and

competitiveness. The ICT development have introduced new best strategic and operational management practices that lead organizations to shift their orientation from product orientation to a consumer orientation that customizes products and services and adopts flexible and responsive practices to the marketplace. Success will increasingly depend on sensing and responding to rapidly changing customer needs and using ICTs for delivering the right product, at the right time, at the right price, for the right customer. ICTs can contribute to the value chain of products and services, by either improving their cost position of differentiation; they reshape competitiveness and thus have strategic implications for the prosperity of the organizations (Porter, 2001). The competitiveness of both tourism enterprises and destinations will increasingly therefore depend on the ability of those organizations to use ICTs strategically and tactically for improving their positioning. Hotels use ICTs in order to improve their operations, manage their inventory and maximize their profitability. Their systems facilitate both in house management a distribution through electronic media.

For hotels promotion; there are advertising, publicity, and sales promotion. Advertising is a collection of activities by which visual and oral messages are used to pass a message to a particular target group in order to inform and influence them to buy the product or use the service or act in favor towards ideas, persons, trademarks or institutions featured. The role of advertising is to bring a product or service to tension and attention of potential and current customers, this comes in handy if a company is just starting to let the public know about it and what it's producing or offering. Sales promotion is the act of selling a product or service in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity. Publicity is the deliberate attempt to manage the public's perception of a subject. The subjects of publicity include people, goods and services, organizations of all kinds, and works of art or entertainment.

The hotel industry is using computers in all the departments like front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, accommodation, billing, etc in order to be promoted through different ways of media such as printing, publication, broadcasting, out-of-home advertising on billboards, street furniture, and transit, and alternative, internet. The role of promotion is to communicate with individuals, groups or organization to directly or indirectly facilitate exchange by informing and persuading one or more audiences to accept an organization's products. The other role is that companies must communicate with their customers, this communication should not be left to chance, design communication to your specific target audience: target market, part of target market, and different stakeholders of your organization.

Even if the ICTs are used in most of hotels in order to promote their products, many small and medium sized, independent, seasonal and family hotels find it extremely difficult to utilize ICTs due to: lack of capital for purchasing hardware and software, lack of standardization and professionalism, insufficient marketing and technology training and understanding, small size

which multiplies the administration required computer reservation systems to deal with each property, and the unwillingness of proprietors to lose control over their property. These properties are increasingly placed at a major disadvantage, as they cannot be represented in the electronic marketplace and so jeopardize their future existence

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This research was based on descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey design, particularly descriptive correlation and descriptive comparative design was used to test for significant relationship between the IV (Information Communication Technology) and DV (Hotel Promotion). Ex post facto was utilized to retrieve data on Hotel Promotion.

### **Research Population**

Thus, the population of this study was the employees of these hotels. The employees were targeted because they expected to be in a better position to provide the data requirement about the hotel promotion. We took a respective number from different hotels.

### **Sample Size**

We used employees from these hotels according to Sloven's formula.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the employees/respondents to use in the sample. A list of employees was compiled using records from the managers. This list served as a sampling frame. From the list the employees were selected using simple random sampling. This sampling technique was used to give each employee an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

The names of employees written on the pieces of paper and collected in container. They have been then shuffled and reshuffled a number of times. After each shuffle a piece of paper was picked from the container without replacement. The employees whose name appeared on the piece of paper was selected to take part in this study.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher used the research made questionnaire. Questionnaire and observations Checklist respectively applied for this investigation. Primary data was collected from the selected

population with the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire comprised two sections: one was on the Information Communication Technology and the second on the Hotel promotion.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The validity refers the appropriateness of the instrument while reliability refers to its consistency in measuring whatever it is intended to measure (Amin, 2005).

The content validity method was used. The reliability of both employees' instruments was established through a test-retest method. The researcher conducted a pre-test for the two sets of questionnaires in La Palme Hotel. A pretest was conducted again after one week to the same respondents in the same Hotels and analyse the results, in order to see if the questionnaires will have consistency in reliability.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

#### ***Before the administration of the questionnaires***

An introduction letter was obtained from the Indira Gandhi National Open University for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective employees of hotels.

#### ***During the administration of the questionnaires***

The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaires unanswered.

The researcher and assistants emphasized retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.

On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all are answered.

#### ***After the administration of the questionnaires***

The data gathered was collated, encoded into the computer and statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Data Analysis**

Objective 1: the researcher used the tables and percentage distribution.

Objective 2 and 3: the researcher utilized means and standard deviation to compute for the levels of ICT and Hotel Promotion.

Objective 4: the researcher used Pearson linear correlation coefficient to compare for the significant relationship between ICT and Hotel Promotion.

### **Ethical Consideration**

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher: Seek permission to adopt the standardized questionnaire on hotel effectiveness through a written communication to the author. The respondents and hotels were coded instead of reflecting the names. Solicit permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the hotels included in the study. Acknowledge the authors quoted in this study and the author of the standardized instrument through citations and referencing. Present the findings in a generalized manner.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error at 0.05 level of significance. Measures also indicated in order to minimize if not to eradicate the threats to the validity of the findings of this study.

1. *Extraneous variables* which were beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' honesty, personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study.
2. *Instrumentation*: The research instruments on resource availability and utilization are not standardized. Therefore, a validity and reliability test has been done to produce a credible measurement of the research variables.
3. *Testing*: The use of research assistants can bring about inconsistency in the administration of the questionnaires in terms of time of administration, understanding of the items in the questionnaires and explanations given to the respondents. To minimize this threat, the research assistants were oriented and briefed on the procedures to be done in data collection.

*Attrition/Mortality*: Not all questionnaires maybe returned neither completely answered nor even retrieved back due to circumstances on the part of the respondents such as travels, sickness, hospitalization and refusal/withdrawal to participate. In anticipation to this, the researcher reserved more respondents by exceeding the minimum sample size. The respondents were also reminded not to leave any item in the questionnaires unanswered and were closely followed up as to the date of retrieval.

## Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data.

This chapter shows the profile of respondents, the description of independent and dependent variables and the testing of relationship between the two variables. The pertinent research hypothesis is also tested here.

### Profile of respondents.

The first objective of this study was to determine the profile of respondents. There were employees of selected hotels in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. The researcher distributed 43 questionnaires to all selected respondents, but only 42 were received and used for analysis. Hotels employees were described in terms of age, marital status, experience, qualification. Table 4.1 presents the profile of respondents.

Table 4.1. Profile of respondents

Employees respondents

Main category	Sub - category	Frequency	Percent %
Age	Less than 21 years (Teenage)	10	24
	21 – 30 (Early Adulthood)	22	52
	31 – 40 (Adulthood)	7	17
	40 – 50 (Middle adult)	2	5
	50 – ( Late adulthood)	1	2
S/Total		42	100
2) Marital status	Sub - category	Frequency	Percent
Single		29	69
Married		12	28
Divorced		0	0

Widowed		1	3
S/Total		42	100
3) Gender	Male	28	67
	Female	14	33
S/Total		42	100
4) Experience	Less than 1 year	3	7
	Between 2 years	18	43
	Between 2 and 4 years	16	38
	4 and above	5	12
S/Total		42	100
5) Qualification	Certificates	4	9
	A'level	13	31
	Diploma	3	7
	Bachelor	19	45
	Masters	3	7
	PhDs	0	0
	Others	0	0
	S/Total		42

Table 4.1 indicates, in terms of age, that the majority of employees are in Early Adulthood period ( 22 respondents or 52% are aged between 21 and 30), while the minority ( 1 respondent or 2% ) is more than 50 years old ( late adults).

Concerning Marital status, the big number of respondents are single because they cover 69% while the minority are on the part of widowed or 3% of the whole number of respondents. We can say that the young are majority and married minority ( frequency of 12 or the 28%).

Concerning gender, the male covers a big number of employees in selected hotels where they have a frequency of 28/42 or 67% of percent.

Concerning qualification, the table 4.1 indicates that the big number of employees of selected hotels in Musanze District have Bachelor degrees means that completion of Universities studies in different domains ( 19 frequency or 45%), the following have advanced levels where 13 frequency or 31% and those who have Diploma are 3 or 7%) certificates are 4 or 9% and there is no PhD's employees in those selected hotels.

When we consider experience, table 4.1 indicates that the big number of the selected hotels in Musanze District have been working for a period ranging only between 1 and 2 yeras or ( 18 frequency and 43% ) followed by a period ranging only between 2 and 4 years or ( 16 frequency and 38% ) while the last goes about 4 years and above or ( 5 frequent and 12% ).

### **Description of independent variable**

The independent variable in this study was information communication Technology and was measured using qualitative questions in the questionnaire and each of the questionnaire item was likert scaled using four points, where

1 = Strongly agree → Excellent

2 = Agree → Satisfactory

3 = Disagree → Good

4 = Strongly Disagree → Poor

The respondents were all employees of La Palme and Vilunga Hotels, Musanze District, Northern Province. Responses were analysed using SPSS' Summary statistics showing mean, interpretation and rank as indicated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 : Level of information communication Technology in selected Hotels, in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda.

1 – 2.49 = Unagreeable to the statement

250 – 3.49 = is neutral to the statement



3.50 – 5.00 = Agreeable to the statement

Indicators of ICT	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
We use computer for our daily activities.	4.06	Agreeable to the statemet	1
We are connected to internet.	3.78	Agreeable to the statemet	2
We have wireless connection.	4.65	Agreeable to the statemet	3
We check emails easily.	3.91	Agreeable to the statemet	4
We use telephone lines in our hotel.	4.78	Agreeable to the statemet	5
All rooms are connected to internet.	4.96	Agreeable to the statemet	6
All rooms have TV satellites.	3.83	Agreeable to the statemet	7
We have radio and television lines in our rooms.	4.63	Agreeable to the statemet	8
All rooms have wireless connection.	3.76	Agreeable to the statemet	9
We've website where you can get all information.	4.57	Agreeable to the statemet	10
Reservations can be done on internet.	3.79	Agreeable to the statemet	11
We have materials which can facilitate teleconferences.	4.86	Agreeable to the statemet	12
There is Telephone line in our rooms and conference halls.	3.31	Agreeable to the statemet	13
We have materials	2.40	D	14
Different command can be given using computers	2.06	D	15

We use Video and Audio interaction meetings.	3.33	Neutral	16
We have links with other hotels.	2.76	Neutral	17
Average	3.84	Agreeable to the statement	

For this Level of ICT in selected hotels, I used the Likert – type scale which are grouped into 3 only:

1) Agreeable ( or favorable),

2) Neutral

3) Unagreeable ( unfavourable)

The decision rule should then be that any weighted mean ranging from 1 – 2.49 in unagreeable to the statement; 2.50 – 3.49 in neutral and 3.50 – 5.00 is agreeable to the statement. Which means that if the overall average is 3.84, it means that the respondents are agreeable to the statement mentioned in independent variable wwhich is ICT .

### **Description of the Dependent variable**

The dependent variable in this study was Hotels promotion in La Palme and Vilunga hotels, Musanze District, Norhtern Province, Rwanda. To measure how wmployees promote their hotels, 14 statements were presented and respondents were asked to give their opinion on them as indicated in the table below.

Table 4.3: Level of Hotels Promotions in selected hotels, Musanze district, Northern Province,Rwanda.

Hotels promotion	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
We use different publications	4.76	Agreeable	1

We have hotel maps directions	4.31	Agreeable	2
There are brochures which give different information	4.28	Agreeable	3
We have advertised our hotel in different magazines.	4.06	Agreeable	4
There are different booklets to give information on our hotel	4.03	Agreeable	5
We use audio –visual materials during advertisement	3.83	Agreeable	6
There are websites is contains all required information	3.78	Agreeable	7
We use foress medium to advertise our hotel	3.74	Agreeable	8
We facilitate tourists to travel for different attractions.	3.69	Agreeable	9
We use personnel selling and sales promotion	3.41	Neutral	10
We use different pamphrects during advertisement	3.88	Agreeable	11
We attend different exhibition in order to advertise our hotels	3.32	Neutral	12
We use different meetings in order to sensitise our products	2.40	Disagreeable	13
We offer promotions to customers	2.47	Disagreeable	14
Average	3.71	Agreeable to statements	

The means in table 4.3 indicate that employees rate the level of hotels promotion in Lapalme and Vilunga hotels, Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. For example they agreed with statements that their hotels have website which contain all required information in their hotels

promotion ( Mean = 3.78), that employees use different publications (mean = 4.76), that they have hotel maps directions (mean = 4.31), that there are brochures to give different information (mean = 4.28), that they have advertised their hotels in different magazines (mean = 4.03), that they use audio – visual materials during advertisement (mean = 3.83), that they use press medium to advertise their hotel, (mean = 3.74), that they facilitate tourists to travel for different attractions (mean = 3.69). These are neutral respondents on the statement said that they use personnel selling and sales promotion (mean = 3.41) and some disagreed on the statement that they use different meetings in order to sensitise their products (mean = 2.40).

In summary, the picture shows that employees rate the level of hotels promotions in La palme and Vilunga hotels, Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda was high. This indicated by the mean index for all the 14 items which turned out to be 3.71 ( which falls under Agreeable on the Likert scale), indicating that respondents rated the level of hotels promotion as high.

## **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations following the study objectives and pertinent hypothesis. The areas for further research are also suggested here.

### **FINDINGS**

The first objective was to determine the profile of employee respondents in terms of age, marital status, level of education, and level of qualification experience. The study indicated that the majority of employee respondents are between 21 and 30 years old (52%). The small number of employees is for 50 years old and above (late Adulthood). Who cover 2%. Concerning Gender, the study indicated that a big number of employee respondents are male ( 67% ) while the female respondents are 33%. Concerning the marital status, the study indicated that a big number of employees respondents are single ( 69% ), the married (28%), while the widowed are 3%. Concerning experience, the study indicated that a big number of employee respondents are between 1 and 2 years (43%), while the small numbers are those of 4 years and above (12%). Concerning qualifications, the employee respondents, the study indicated that a big number of employee respondents are bachelor degrees (45%), the Diploma and Masters have 7%, the Advanced level are 31% while the PhD holders cover 0%.

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of information communication Technology and it measured through 16 statements which had the overall average of 3.84 and meant that the respondents are agreeable to the statement mentioned in independent variable.

The third objective of the study was to determine the Level of Hotel promotion, a case study of la Palme and Vilunga Hotels, Musanze, Rwanda. The general picture shows that employee rate the level of hotels promotions was high. This indicated by the mean index for all the 14 items which turned out to be 3.7 (which falls under agreeable on the Likert Scale), indicating that respondents rated the level of hotels promotion as high.

The fourth objective was to establish whether there is a significant relationship between the level of ICT and the level of hotels promotion in La Palme and Vilunga hotels in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. It was found that these two variables are significantly correlated at ( $r$ -value = 0.829 and  $p$  0.018). Basing on the calculated  $r$ - value, the researcher concluded that there is a significant correlation between the level of ICT and Hotels promotion in selected Hotels, which provided enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis of there is no relationship between ICT and hotels promotion in selected hotels, Musanze, Rwanda.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between ICT and hotel promotion in selected hotels, Musanze Northern Province, Rwanda, was confirmed, which generated the following conclusions: High ICT will significantly lead to high hotels promotion in selected hotels, Musanze, Rwanda.

If hotels are well equipped in ICT materials, for examples; having computers, Telephone lines will have promotion all over the world and be known. So the ICT has a great impact on the hotels promotion in selected hotels in Musanze District, Rwanda.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Various recommendations are made on the previously reached conclusions. With respect to the way hotels in selected Musanze District should be promoted in order to be known and achieve their goals alive the world, the following is recommended:

The government should significantly plan effectively for the different hotels and making follow-up for the better promotion and good service delivery.

The government through RDB (Rwanda Development Board) should prepare and organize different trainings on ICT for the hotel's employees.

The district should ensure good services to the hotels and materials used should be well maintained.

The District of Musanze should encourage the hotels managers to take care of all materials needed for their hotels promotion and encourage using different ways in order to promote hotels.

The hotels managers should ensure good usage of materials needed in their hotels.

The employees should also take care of materials used in order to promote their hotels especially those of ICT.

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