

BOOK REVIEW

HOSPITALITY MARKETING: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE (2ND EDITION)

Authors

DAVID BOWIE

FRANCIS BUTTLE

Butterworth-Heinemann

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The ideal person to write a review of books is definitely someone who has written a textbook himself. Bowie and Buttle indeed have made a promising effort to disseminate an important perspective on a subject related to hospitality. One might be quick to conclude that this text is just a dime a dozen and a window dressing of the first edition since not much space is dedicated to reflect on marketing theory and practice to the level of the state of the art. But this sort of unfair review is best left to those scholars who had experienced writing a textbook which is celebrated throughout the English speaking world, like Kotler or Drucker. The review here is a modest attempt to guide those who seek some idea and facts about the book before purchasing it.

The textbook is divided into five parts; introduction, pre-encounter marketing, encounter marketing, post-encounter marketing, and marketing plan. The first part consists of an introductory chapter, followed by a second containing eight feeder chapters; a third part provides three chapters, the fourth with two chapters and final part

provides a framework for a marketing plan in one extended chapter. The introductory chapter gives emphasis on definitional aspect on the state of the art of marketing theory and practice but no definition was provided on hospitality tradition and practices, perhaps intentionally by the authors. This could be due to the author's presumption that the readers are those with substantive background information and experience from a variety of sectors that characterize the hospitality industry. Nonetheless, "service characteristics" of hospitality industry is furnished to overcome this deficiency but further confusion is to be expected from a freshman surrounding what is a hospitality industry really is? For example a cruise business as a part of the hospitality industry which is left out entirely. In addition, the description of eight elements of marketing mix in hospitality industry does little to help overcome this definitional issue.

Part B, C and D consist of thirteen chapters starting with the familiar marketing research, understanding and segmenting customers, competitive strategies, developing the offer,

locating offer, pricing the offer, distributing the offer, communicating the offer, managing the physical environment, managing service processes, managing customer-contact employees, managing customer satisfaction and relationship marketing. In Part E, the final chapters highlight the principles and practice of marketing plan. The authors' attempt in the text can be described as both practical and coherent. The volume is structured around practicality, examining marketing activities before, during and after the customer experiences service in the various hospitality sectors. Overall, this is a useful guide for hospitality and tourism undergraduates and those who seek to understand practical aspects of hospitality mainly around British Isle and its prodigy in Oceania, which is Australia.

The book represents another demonstration by English and Australian authors to export "Fish and Chips" idea of hospitality marketing to the English speaking readers around the world. This analogy conjures a fried "fresh frozen" fish fillet with greasy vegetable fat and bound to overfill one's stomach with cholesterol and starch. It is a tasty but not really a favorite meal for those who are serious about health. The second edition was simply a quick menu from an "English cookbook" which does little to upgrade its earlier edition. For example, very little new information regarding hospitality practices from the East and Orient is incorporated in this second edition. Thus, industry practices provided in the textbook reflects the choice of the authors to exclude hospitality practices from other parts of the world which makes the text more suitable for students in Britain and Australia. The Anglo-centric world view dominates the text scrupulously and the title of the textbook needs further refinement. Maybe "in Britain" should have been included in the title.

A reflexive reading of the text reminds us of the nostalgic eras of late 1980's and early 1990's; during this period polytechnics in United Kingdom were gradually turning into university colleges. During this exciting and vibrant decade, varieties of textbooks are published by academics in these institutions to fill in the gap left by the traditional "red-brick" universities. Furthermore during this period, adopting a non-traditional style of a colorful and attractive textbook was the norms of the day. But graphics and tables in this book are quite small and may cause a strain to the eyes. This book needs further improvement in the attempt to be non-traditional especially in the graphics department.

Even though the chapters are not organized in the traditional four domains of marketing (4Ps) it is organized into a management oriented marketing book. A Systems approach (input-process-output) which originates from Management Science is constantly working behind the text, providing the basic framework in the organization of the chapters. For example, the input-process-output concepts were obvious in the arrangement of the thirteen chapters in the book. These in return, produce a purely mechanistic view of consumption experience by the customer in the hospitality industry. This view which is becoming less relevant and popular in the 21st century is adopted for clarity of the content. Due to this approach context is often lost in the wealth of practical content and the readers were not foretold in the introductory chapters that the whole is bigger than sum of its parts.

Furthermore, the four domains of marketing were not given equal and contextualized treatment but the authors manage to sustain these domains in a clever manner. For

example four domains of marketing, which is product life cycle, consumer behavior, price discrimination and retailer wheels (distribution system) were not mentioned at all in the text but tailored into concept of “pre-during-post” consumption experience of the customer. This subtle and sublime method illustrates that a Western positivist culture is prescribed throughout the book. The prescription is very much in its infancy in many of the Non-Western parts of the world where context plays an integral element in hospitality marketing.

With respect to the pedagogical map of the book, it is clear but the epistemological position is fuzzy. For example some of the chapter titles repeatedly use the word “offer” i.e., developing offer, locating offer, pricing offer which seems to highlight this epistemological issue. Choice of words for chapter headings in a book that will be used by college and university students should have been carefully selected with an eye on the realm of epistemology. For students, the need to understand theory and its lexicon are justifiable since it is the most practical intellectual pursuits during their time at

college or university. The authors neglect to advance some basic epistemological practice in a *bona fide* manner. It is clear that the chapters developed in this book are mute in describing any good foundational marketing theory as a basis for guiding the readers with some sense of practical intellectual effort. The epistemological direction could have been improved in this second edition.

Like many others that are trying to take the “off the beaten path” from Kotler’s mainstream route, the author successfully takes an alternative route from the American textbook tradition. But by taking this route, the author diminished its ability to guide the reader in a repackaged tradition of marketing knowledge, but moving closer to the field of management studies. Marketing theories and practice along with international hospitality practices were never fully celebrated in this textbook, but rituals of western *management concept* were cleverly disguised as hospitality marketing practices. In conclusion this attempt could represent “a dime a dozen” in the practical and tacit knowledge frontier of undergraduates who wish to embark on a hospitality marketing career.

JAAFAR ALI MOHD IBRAHIM
UUM COLGIS
Universiti Utara Malaysia