ELECTRONIC MARKETING PRACTICES AT HOTELS IN TURKEY AND A SURVEY WITH FOUR AND FIVE STAR HOTELS

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Marketing activities to provide competition advantage, particularly electronic marketing have been a very important need for hotel operations. Through electronic marketing tools, hotel operations can have access to more mass of people faster with less cost. Electronic marketing of hotels in Turkey were not analyzed enought and in this survey, it was questioned how much hotel establishments in Turkey benefited from electronic marketing practices and how much they could keep up with the changes in electronic marketing. With this purposes, it was intended to determine the level of electronic marketing practices and electronic marketing elements via their own website, according to the types and classes of hotel establishments. The method of content analysis was used. According to data of collected from hotels' web sites in Marmara Region, %96.8 of hotels are covered by search engines and five star hotels & chain hotels were found more dynamic and were allowing the practices for electronic marketing.

Keywords: *Hotel, Electronic Marketing, Hotel Web Sites*

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

INTRODUCTION

Electronic marketing (E-marketing) aims to promote and sell a product with a low budget and by using the opportunities offered by Internet. Low cost, effective promotion and being open to innovations are among the evident characteristics of electronic marketing. It is known that electronic marketing has benefits such as facilitating access to customer information, minimizing the time to be lost, reducing personnel costs, providing important information about customer expectations and

approaches of customers to the product, enhancing the efficiency of the personnel, improving easy accessibility, and providing coordination and flow of information among departments (Ruzgar Sevinc, 2007:10). It is known that after the processes required for electronic marketing have been completed and a specific customer mass has been achieved, there is a need to apply those strategies that will make existing customers dependent (Civelek Sozer, 2003:179).

When booking systems at the website were first designed for users, factors such as price, security and comprehensibility were important. However, with an increase in the use of websites by users, it was considered important to access much information (such as communication, virtual tour and access to different links), to emphasize the functionalities of operations (such as clarity and comprehensibility of information about purchasing, provision of all information on services and products, fast and stable booking systems, security measures, cancellation of operations, and repayment) and to integrate them into the booking systems of hotels (Kim & Kim, 2004:390). Eli Goldratt states that "If you want to be competitive, you'd better concentrate on the value perception of the market" (Goldratt, 2008:134). It is seen that the availability of an opportunity for fast communication and for reaching new users via Internet increases the use of Internet as a means of marketing by tourism establishments (Boylu and Tuncer, 2008:12). With the conducting of those affairs that are included in the scope of marketing activities in electronic medium, potential customers are reached; the costs of marketing activities intended to provide information about the company, brand, facilities and services are minimized; and accurate results can be created for the decisions to be made.

The first remarkable advantage of e-marketing is that it reduces costs. The cost of e-marketing platform is lower than those of other marketing platforms such as face-to-face sales or distributor platforms and it can offer establishments an opportunity to access customers whom the existing distribution channels will not be able to reach due to local and temporary constraints. E-marketing platform reduces costs with the three advantages it offers to its consumers and is able to increase the opportunity for access (Sheth Sharma, 2005:616). *First*, without any need for human beings, marketing companies are able to offer unlimited information to their customers. This is an advantage when compared with other types of communication, for the amount of offered information is more than the information offered by any other types of communication, and the information can be presented in a format, by which the target mass can comprehend more easily. For instance, it is very difficult to

design plane tariffs and booking systems to serve personal needs. Within this scope, the alternatives offered for customers in e-marketing or web-based format are very high in number. *Secondly*, e-marketing companies allow an interaction that adapts information to their customers with respect to the design of services and products to meet the special needs of individual customers. *Finally*, e-marketing platform, as applied in successful companies such as Dell and amazon.com, enables operations to be performed only between the customer and the firm without any need for other people. With electronic marketing, hotel establishments may have various advantages. These advantages can be itemized as follows:

- Instead of preparing brochures, hotel establishments might perform promotions at their website;
- Service might be provided for 7 days and 24 hours;
- An interactive communication might be made with potential customers without any international differences of time or language;
- A global customer profile might be formed;
- The questions to be posed, and information to be demanded, by customers might be responded soon;
- Sections of views and recommendations might be prepared, and positive and negative ideas about prices, services and products might be learned;
- The sector might be tracked and, when necessary, developments might be adapted soon;
- Innovations, changes and extra advantages regarding the development of products might be utilized;
- When necessary, all customers, partners and the press might be provided with information and promotion via Internet, also using the video conference system;
- Sources of income such as sales and advertisement in electronic medium might be created;
- The cost of online booking is low, and the commission paid to intermediaries decreases.
- In addition, there might be online advertisements, promotions, cost-free products, software, and low-priced sales.

Besides the advantages concerned, a disadvantage of e-marketing is that it takes seconds and even milliseconds for Internet users to exit the website that they are touring and immediately make comparisons with the rival hotel establishments. It is known that in order to take place at the top ranks in the use of information technologies, cost, reliability, risk

problems, security, and especially the security holes of payment are considered as great problems in electronic marketing (Pires Aisbett, 2002:294).

LITERATURE REVIEW

When the existing literature was examined, it was determined that there were various studies on electronic marketing practices at the websites of four- and five-star hotel establishments. In her study, Sigala (2001) found that many hotels used Internet to promote the hotel and to provide information about prices. In the same study, it was expressed that those hotels which offered alternatives of discount so as to increase their sales promotions and bookings constituted the majority. It was found that 16% of the hotels offered online booking and safe modes of payment, whereas all hotels made bookings via e-mail. According to the findings, the hotels were recommended to design their website according to changing customer needs and make them online, visible and accessible.

In their study for the evaluation of Internet websites of Accommodation Establishments in Turkey, Karamustafa, Bickes and Ulama (2002) stress that the use of Internet websites for communication of marketing of products offered by accommodation establishments is quite new. They conclude that the habits of existing and potential customers to go shopping on the Internet have not reached the desired level yet. Yalcin and Demircioglu (2002) found that firms benefited superficially from marketing communication activities at their websites and used various electronic marketing activities at elementary stage. Internet as a new means of marketing and the classification of factors affecting the use of Internet. Pirnar (2005) stated that the tourism industry was also suitable for e-commerce due to its structure and that e-commerce provided both tourism establishments and customers with savings of cost and time.

In a study by Chiang (2003) that examined the websites of some 65 hotels in Singapore, it was determined that online booking; online payment, fast discount and online confirmation opportunities; restaurant promotions; and family-child promotions took place at the websites of the hotels within the scope of the study at the rates of 95%, 83%, 49% and 3%, respectively.

In their research on the contents and operation capabilities of websites of some 77 5-star hotels in China, Hsu, Zhu and Agrusa (2004) observed that since numerous hotels had international customers, English and Chinese generally predominated at hotels' websites and that 32.5%

had a website only in English, while 1.3% had a website only in Chinese. Websites generally provided basic information about hotel and facility. 62% of hotels offered an online booking service. The most interesting finding of this study is that although many hotels offered bilingual or multilingual services at their website, online booking operations were mostly performed in English. This yields the conclusion that five-star hotels generally regarded the English-speaking people in other countries as their target customer mass. Only 5% of the hotels offered online booking in Chinese. However, many hotel websites did not offer links to other sites that provided added value such as travel partners (car rental and plane ticket) and local attraction points. As a result of the study, it was stated that the presentation of additional functions and services at websites to visitors and consumers provided websites with added value and attracted potential customers more.

In their study, Baloglu and Pekcan (2006) suggested findings regarding website design at luxurious hotels. The research was carried out at some 139 four- and five-star hotel establishments in Antalya, Mugla and Istanbul with a high recognition of destination. It was observed that in approximately 75% of the hotels, online information demand forms, dates of special events, online view forms, links to other related sites, promotions, online payments, links to tourism information sites, audio features, date of last update, and use of advertisements were rather scarce. It was found that the hotels in Turkey did not fully benefit from Internet and e-marketing, regardless of type and class of the hotels.

In her study on the role of Internet in destination marketing, Ozdemir (2007) stated that tourism marketers benefited intensively from the opportunities provided by technological developments in the field of destination marketing as well and that they gave up the traditional marketing understanding and were headed for a modern marketing understanding. It was expressed that as regards Internet, it was concentrated on being different, website designs and website contents in the tourism industry, wherein international competition is intensive.

In a study by Tutar, Kocabay and Kilinc (2007) on e-commerce practices in tourism sector in and around Nevsehir, it was found that costs decreased and productivity increased upon the commencement of the use of information and technology in accommodation establishments. It was stressed that the use of computer-based automation was at the rate of 88% at the front office department of the hotels located at the surveyed site and that competitive advantage in the tourism sector might be provided using information and technology.

In their study on the content analysis of hotels' websites, Bayram and Yayli (2008) analyzed the websites of some 286 four- and five-star hotel establishments. According to survey results, it was seen that hotel establishments widely included booking by e-mail, hotel images and room images – the criteria that determine marketing practices at websites - in their website. Another striking finding of the study was the quite high number of websites that did not offer any opportunity for online booking or online payment.

In a survey on the effect of the management structure of accommodation establishments on web-based marketing activities, Boylu and Tuncer (2008) found that the bookings that accommodation establishments received via electronic systems were at a low level. The emphasis on the fact that more than half of the establishments did not accept online payment and that the management structure of an establishment was an important factor in updating the information on promotions, products and prices was striking. In the survey, it was concluded that there was no correlation between advertising on Internet and the management structure of the establishment, that the development of security required for e-marketing activities was insufficient and that it was not adequately understood that Internet was an opportunity for competition and for opening to the world.

Kanellopoulos (2006) indicates that consumers or travel agents has opportunity to create, manage and update itineraries. Web application allows the customer to specify a set of preferences for a vacation and query a set of information sources to find components such as car rental, leisure activities and air fares in real-time. Also it was seen that it Intelligent tourism information systems offer full integration, flexibility, specialization and personalization.

A SURVEY AT FOUR STAR AND FIVE STAR HOTEL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE MARMARA REGION

Purpose, Scope and Method

In the research on the investigation of the electronic marketing practices of four- and five-star hotel establishments operating in the Marmara Region, it was questioned how much hotel establishments benefited from electronic marketing practices and how much they could keep up with the changes in electronic marketing. With this purpose, it was intended to determine the rates of use of electronic marketing practices and electronic marketing elements via their own website,

according to the types and classes of hotel establishments. The method of content analysis, a qualitative research technique, was applied in the collection of data about electronic marketing practices in the hotel establishments.

When preparing the data collection scale used in the research, the previous studies by Karamustafa, Bickes and Ulama (2002), Baloglu and Pekcan (2006), and Bayram and Yayli (2008) were taken as the basis, and a new assessment form for electronic marketing practices was created. An individual assessment form was used for each visited website; the websites were assessed one by one depending on the specified criteria; and except for those websites which were under construction, each website was visited only once and the obtained data were recorded in the prepared assessment form. Assessment of the criteria under each category in the assessment form was marked as Present (1) and Absent (0).

The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which is regarded as the most used reliability measurement to determine the reliability of scales, was used in this research. Reliability of the data were tested, and the reliability of the scale was found as $\alpha=0.828$. Frequency (f), percentage (%) and chi-square ($\square 2$) were used in the analysis of data. Chi-square analysis was made in order to determine whether there was any significant difference in terms of the prepared criteria among hotels' websites according to the type and class of establishments.

In the Marmara Region, the number of four-star hotel establishments was found as 135, while the number of five-star hotel establishments was found as 55. Since the website of a four-star hotel was under construction and two hotels did not have any website and since the websites of two hotels among five-star hotel establishments were under construction and one hotel did not have any website at the time of the study, a total of 185 hotel establishments constituted the sample of the study.

The research limit was the date interval when the criteria for electronic marketing practices were assessed. Because websites made innovations at specific time spans, they had a dynamic structure and the time intervals of the activities varied, the research was limited to the date interval of August 3, 2009-August 15, 2009.

Findings and Evaluation

Before starting with the practice section, the four- and five-star hotel establishments in the Marmara Region were listed. The search engine was written as Google, and their status of being within top ten on the page was checked. At the same time, their links with travel portals on

the first page were also examined. The forms of content analysis were prepared as many as the number of hotels. Later on, the hotel pages were visited one by one, the criteria were assessed and the data were transferred to the forms. In order to understand the likelihood of the noticeability of the importance of electronic marketing by hotel establishments, the booking stages of all hotels (on request-online booking) were performed respectively, and the criteria were assessed accordingly in the research. The electronic marketing criteria of hotel establishments were examined as Contact information (14 subtitles) and promotion (17 subtitles).

Four- and five-star hotel establishments were searched one by one via the search engine 'Google'. The hotels were all within top ten ranks. Of all five-star hotels, 43 performed their promotions and sales at www.bookinturkey.com. As a result of the research, it was found that of all four-star hotels, 51 were members of www.bookinturkey.com, 19 were members of www.booking.com, six were members of www.travelguide.com, 10 were members of www.reservationeurope.com and three hotels were members of www.expedia.com travel portal, and their sales were performed at the sites concerned.

Table 1 Distribution of Hotel Establishments by Type and Class

	Hotel Type		Hotel Class	
	Chain Hotel	Independant Hotel	Five Star	Four Star
n	57	128	53	132
%	30,8	69,2	28,6	71,4

The frequencies and percentages of the criteria created for the assessment of electronic marketing practices of hotel establishments, considered as the sample in the research, at their website are presented in Table 3. According to the data under the title of contact information, it was observed that hotel establishments attached importance to the issue of communication and that communication instruments such as online communication (1.6%) and online chat (4.9%) had low rates of use at the websites of hotel establishments. It might be stated that the use of electronic bulletin that presents news from within and outside the establishment (20.0%) is low. It might be stated that the low use of FAQ (Frequently asked questions) (4.9%) resulted from the easiness to access customers via e-mail. It is seen that the rates of use of alternatives of Customer Complaint Line (4.9%), Recommend (Send) to your Friend

(6.5%), Satisfaction Survey (10.3%), Online Visitor Book (13.5%) and Help (10.8%) at websites are low.

Of the features entitled the property of promotion, being found in the search engine was found to be at the rate of 96.8%. This rate indicates that the hotels are aware of the importance of being found by search engines, and particularly of being included in the page that appears first. It is seen that those hotels which are not found in search engines benefit from travel portals and make use of functions such as being found, noticed and recognized as well as sales in electronic medium. The feature of use of a simple and comprehensive booking form was found as 86.5%. It might be stated that the simplicity and comprehensibility of booking forms, which have an important place in the ability of hotels to perform online sales, indicate that importance is attached to this subject, that they provide customers with comfort of use, and that they might encourage manipulation to online bookings. The 69.2% rate of online booking in the sample shows that the importance of this subject has been understood. In addition, depending on the identical percentages of the features of being registered in online booking and travel portals, it can be evaluated that hotel establishments were aware of the importance of performing sales at their own website and that they also continued to perform sales via travel portals. Apart from online booking, the 60% rate of on-request (ask-buy) booking alternative and the 51.1% rate of other booking alternatives demonstrate that the hotels used the feature of performing sales at their own websites.

Table 2 Electronic Marketing Criteria for Hotel Establishments (n=185)

E-marketing Criteria	Present		Absent		E- marketing Criteria	Present		Absent	
PROMOTION	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**CONTACT INFORMATION**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Customer Membership Opportunity	67	36.2	118	63.8	E-Mail Address	176	95.1	9	4.9
Being found in the Search Engine	179	96.8	6	3.2	E-Bulletin	37	20.0	148	80.0
Registration in the Travel	128	69.2	57	30.8	FAQ	9	4.9	176	95.1

Portal									
Online Collection	103	55.7	82	44.3	Help	20	10.8	165	89.2
Other Payment	73	39.5	112	60.5	Online Visitor Book	25	13.5	160	86.5
Online Call Sales Center	15	8.1	170	91.9	Feedback Form	78	42.2	107	57.8
Promotions	111	60.0	74	40.0	Satisfaction Survey	19	10.3	166	89.7
Member Promotions	48	25.9	137	74.1	Online Communication Prog.	3	1.6	182	98.4
Innovation	81	44.0	103	56.0	Online Chat Program	9	4.9	176	95.1
Advertisements	46	24.9	139	75.1	Fax	178	96.2	7	3.8
Dynamic Pricing	104	56.2	81	43.8	Telephone	182	98.4	3	1.6
Application of Special Membership Discount	54	29.2	131	70.8	Announcements-news	53	28.6	132	71.4
Application of Agency Discount	58	31.4	127	68.6	Right Customer Complaint L.	9	4.9	176	95.1
Simple and Comprehensive Book. Form	160	86.5	25	13.5	Recommend to your Friend	12	6.5	173	93.5
On-Request Book.	111	60.0	74	40.0					
Other Booking Alternatives	94	51.1	90	48.9					
Online Booking	128	69.2	57	30.8					

Within the sample, it was observed that the online call center for booking (8.1%) was not used, that online collection was performed at the rate of 55.7% and that other payment alternatives were used at the rate of

39.5%. It might be stated that all those hotels which made online booking within the sample prepared their booking pages in such a way that they were quite practical, easy-to-use and professional and they allowed making operations in a short time. The preference of online marketing, which provides customers with an alternative of immediate confirmation and payment, might have caused a reduction in the rate of use of booking by electronic mail. Besides, it might be stated that the rate of making bookings by telephone and fax is still higher than predicted (51.1%).

Chi-square was used as the analysis method in order to test whether the correlation observed among the variables in the cross tabulation was statistically significant. Chi-square analysis was made so as to see and assess whether there were differences in the subtitles of features of the prepared websites according to the type and class of hotel establishments within the scope of the research (Yazicioglu Erdogan, 2004:204). As a result of the analyses, it might be stated that the rate of the surveyed hotel establishments to use satisfaction survey at their website (10.3%) was rather low. A satisfaction survey is a two-way process, in which hotel establishments can provide information about their services, and the reasons why its rate of use was low might include elements such as the problems experienced as regards the sending of forms, scarcity of technical knowledge, and inadequacy of knowledge of the analyses of forms.

Independent hotel establishments and five-star hotel establishments use the feature of satisfaction survey at a higher rate. It was observed that especially independent hotel establishments published online many of the satisfaction surveys they used. It might be stated that the comments of those customers who had stayed at the hotel earlier and wrote views will play an important role in the selection of hotels by the customers who will stay at the hotel or receive a different service.

It might be stated that the feature 'recommend to your friend', an important feature for promotion, will increase as time progresses and that the hotel establishments will use it at a higher rate. When it is considered that today's web users always share those elements such as any information, entertainment and image that they like and that attract them, the alternative 'recommend to your friend' might be expressed as an important feature for marketing. It is understood that chain hotel establishments and five-star hotel establishments use the feature 'recommend to your friend' at a higher rate and that this difference is statistically significant (p=0.001).

Of the subtitles of contact information, the features of electronic mail, online visitor book, feedback form, online communication

programs, online chat programs, fax, telephone and right customer complaint line were compared according to type and class of hotels. It was found that the features, which were compared in terms of the type and class of hotels, were close to each other. According to the result of the research, it was observed that traditional instruments were used intensively in communication activities.

Table 3 Distribution of the Feature 'Recommend to your Friend' by Type and Class of Hotels

Recommend to your Friend	Hotel Type		Totel		Hotel Class	
	Chain	Independent	n	%	Four Star	Five Star
Available	48	125	173	93,5	129	44
Not Available	9	3	12	6,5	3	9
Total	57	128	185	100	132	53
	($\chi2=11,754$, P=0,001)				($\chi2=13,487$, P=0,001)	

It is seen that customer membership opportunity was offered at a low rate at the websites of hotel establishments. It is doubtless that making customer membership opportunity attractive and its use will bring advantages to hotels in terms of customer profile, and first of all, hotel establishments have to attach more importance to this feature. Chain hotel establishments and five-star hotel establishments used customer membership opportunity at a higher rate. During their trips, customers generally select known and previously stayed hotel establishments. The availability of customer membership opportunity creates a preference for customers to stay at the same hotel. Hotel establishments offer applications of special membership discount along with the feature of customer membership opportunity. According to the study, it is seen that the applications of special membership discount were used at the hotels at the rate of 29.2%. It might be stated that chain hotel establishments and five-star hotel establishments used the feature of applications of special membership discount at a higher rate and that it was also influential on the preference of chain and five-star hotel establishments. Hotels prefer Google as the search engine at the highest rate. It is understood that five-

star hotel establishments attached more importance to the feature of being found in the search engines.

Table 4 Distribution of the Feature 'Registration in Travel Portals by Type and Class of Hotels

Registration in Travel Portals	Hotel Type		Total		Hotel Class	
	Chain	Independent	n	%	Four Star	Five Star
Available	10	47	57	30,8	49	8
Not Available	47	81	128	69,2	83	45
Total	57	128	185	100	132	53
	(χ2=6,802, P=0,009)				(χ2=8,607, P=0,003)	

When the feature of hotel establishments' registration in travel portals is considered, it is observed that 69.2% were registered. Of the five-star hotels within the scope of the study, 43 performed their promotion and sales at www.bookinturkey.com. As a result of the research, it was found that some 51 four-star hotels were members of www.bookinturkey.com, 19 hotels were members of www.booking.com, 6 hotels were members of www.travelguide.com, 10 hotels were members of www.reservationeurope.com and 3 hotels were members of www.expedia.com travel portal and that their sales were performed at the sites concerned.

Table 5 Distribution of the Feature 'Dynamic Pricing' by Type and Class of Hotels

Dynamic Pricing	Hotel Type		Total	
	Chain	Independent	n	%
Available	12	69	81	43,8
Not available	45	59	104	56,2
Total	57	128	185	100
	(χ2=17,294, P=0,001)			

The rate of the feature of online collection by hotel establishments within the scope of the research was found as 55.7%. However, the rate of

use of the alternative of dynamic pricing was 56.2%. It might be stated that the rates of online payment alternative, one of the important stages of electronic marketing, were low. It might be suggested that those hotel establishments which apply the electronic marketing process have to attach more importance to alternatives regarding payment.

Table 6 Distribution of the Features of Online Call Sales Center, Other Booking and Online Booking by Type and Class of Hotels

Online Call Sales Center	Hotel Type		Total		Hotel Class	
	Chain	Independent	n	%	Four Star	Five Star
Available	44	126	170	91,9	131	39
Not Available	13	2	15	8,1	1	14
Total	57	128	185	100	132	53
	($\chi2=23,890$, P=0,001)				($\chi2=33,413$, P=0,001)	
Other Booking	**Hotel Type**		Total		**Hotel Class**	
	Chain	Independent	n	%	Four Star	Five Star
Available	18	72	90	48,9	72	18
Not Available	39	55	94	51,1	59	35
Total	57	128	185	100	132	53
	($\chi2=17,294$, P=0,001)				($\chi2=1,104$, P=0,293>0,05)	
Online Booking	**Hotel Type**		Total		**Hotel Class**	
	Chain	Independent	n	%	Four Star	Five Star
Available	11	46	57	30,8	45	12
Not Available	46	82	128	69,2	87	41
Total	57	128	185	100	132	53
	($\chi2=5,122$, P=0,024)				($\chi2=2,325$, P=0,127)	

When the type of hotel and the use of the feature of dynamic pricing were compared, it was found that chain hotel establishments used the feature of dynamic pricing at a higher rate than the independent hotel establishments, and it was observed that there was a significant difference between them (p=0.001). It was determined that the rates of use of the

alternative of dynamic pricing by five-star and four-star hotel establishments were close to each other.

It is observed that there was a decrease in booking by electronic mail despite an increase in the use of online booking. Within the framework of this change, it might be stated that hotel establishments preferred online communication more.

It was concluded that chain hotel establishments used the online call sales center at a higher rate than independent hotel establishments. When the class of hotel and the feature of online call sales center were compared, it was seen that five-star hotel establishments used call sales centers at a higher rate. It might be stated that there was an increase in the rates of five-star hotels and chain hotels to use online call centers that enabled making a booking faster and that they used different methods besides traditional bookings. In this way, they could address any customer profile.

Considering that not all customers can have a high rate of use of computer, it might be stated that booking forms have to be prepared to be as comprehensive as possible. Accordingly, it was observed that chain hotel establishments and five-star hotel establishments used the feature of application of agency discount at a higher rate. It was seen that the feature of simple and comprehensive booking form was used at a higher rate at chain hotel establishments.

RESULT AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the results of the research, it is of considerable importance to create a continuously efficient communication process with customers for electronic marketing. More importance should be attached to the means of communication for the information and services demanded by customers. Although the rates of use of classical means of communication are quite high, the use of online means of communication – the indispensable elements of the developing technology – is rather low. As a result of the analysis, it was also concluded that the rates of use of features of electronic bulletin, FAQ, help, announcements, and 'recommend to your friend' were high at five-star and chain hotel establishments. Being found by search engines and especially taking place on the first page are quite essential. In the study, it was determined that search engines were used by the hotels. It was seen that those hotels which were not found in the search engines benefited from travel portals and made use of the functions of being found, noticed and recognized as well as sales. Of the five-star hotels within the scope of the study, 43

performed their promotions and sales at www.bookinturkey.com. It was found that of the four-star hotels that participated in the research, 51 were members of www.bookinturkey.com, 19 hotels were members of www.booking.com, 6 hotels were members of www.travelguide.com, 10 hotels were members of www.reservationeurope.com and 3 hotels were members of www.expedia.com travel portals and that their sales were performed at the sites concerned. Even though there is an easy method that enables customers, who have decided to make a booking, to immediately make a toll-free call and make their booking, the rate of use of the call center is rather low. The reasons for the low rate of use might be considered as technical problems, financial problems and the lack of demands by customers. First of all, users are provided with customer membership opportunities in order for them to become the customers of the hotel. Later on, with the formation of a professional website by the addition of alternatives of outstanding "special membership" discounts, gifts, gift checks and promotions, the electronic marketing process is initiated. It was determined that endeavors of promotion were intended to be used more by five-star and chain hotel establishments, but they were not enough.

As a result of analyses, it was found that five-star hotels and chain hotel establishments used electronic marketing practices more than independent hotels and four-star hotels. It might be stated that to be able to compete and to acquire a global dimension, it is important to complete the stages required for electronic marketing processes, to track innovations and to attach importance to and use security. It might be stated that the application of electronic marketing in professional sense will create opportunities for hotel establishments. Methodologies for the Websites and their quality assessment do not adequately   cover the two major dimensions related to that same quality: technical quality and content quality (Rocha and Victor;(2010), In this context, suggestions for the websites of hotel establishments can be listed as follows:

- The alternatives "Share this website", "Recommend it to your friend" and "Add to your favorites" should be used at the websites of hotels.

- In the communication section, visuality might be enhanced by adding the alternative of leaving visual messages to feedback forms and by attaching photographs and videos of those who have stayed at the hotel (by getting permission) to the online visitor book.

- A visual album section might be prepared so that customers can transfer their images and videos about the hotel to this album. The visual aids likely to be used in advertisements can be obtained from this section.

It is possible to make use of advertisements, which customers prepare, or, in which they act, and, which are shared on Internet.

- Importance should be attached to the use of links of social sites. Innovations in this field should always be tracked, and the changes can be immediately adapted to the websites. For instance, links to common socialization sites such as Facebook and Twitter might be provided.

- An alternative of making comparisons with similar hotel products might be added for the selection of hotel rooms or different services. In this way, customers might be enabled to determine the optimum alternative for themselves among the alternatives.

- Sections as regards creative issues such as playing games, entertainment, painting, and 'you create the hotel' and features, which may include personal forums like 'have your voice heard', might be created. These features might provide an opportunity for the creation of new ideas for a hotel establishment.

- If there are historical, social and interesting attractions with respect to the country, city or environment where a hotel is located, they might be strikingly emphasized, e.g. the location of a hotel in a region where world-famous people live(d) or the location of a hotel next to a chain of restaurants which is the subject of a very popular book.

- It should be ensured that all events that will take place or are considered to take place in the close vicinity of the hotel should always be announced.

- The URL address of a hotel establishment might often be repeatedly advertised at sites, which are highly visited by the target mass of the hotel, in a visible fashion. In addition, except for the Internet medium, URL addresses should be written on billboards, in newspapers and journals with high circulation, at entertainment sites, at shopping centers, on TV, and on the means of mass transportation so that their rates of being remembered can be increased.

- For the fulfillment of many actions, those people who have knowledge of technology (based on applications), who are creative, who are curious and who are researchers and followers should be assigned with the responsibility of electronic marketing and web.

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ENDNOTES

1. This Survey was presented as abstract paper at congress of ISCET International Congress on Tourism – CIT 2010, 21-23 Junho/June 2010 Porto, Portugal

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