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Business as Missions

Applying Business as Missions to the Hospitality Industry

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2015

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

Business is a vehicle highly useful for achieving specific missions for the kingdom of God that could not otherwise be accomplished. A Business as Missions (BAM) organization is one structure of business that focuses intently on accomplishing the mission of reaching others for the kingdom of God. BAMs can be utilized in virtually any industry; however, the following thesis focuses on the unique opportunities that exist within the hospitality industry. These unique opportunities are present because of its relational components and consumer demands for community and social interaction. A hostel is one specific form of a hospitality company that has numerous distinct opportunities to be used for ministry. Due to the atmosphere, ambience, community focus, clientele, and other characteristics associated with hostels, these businesses present many specific ways for a business to accomplish its mission of reaching others for Christ.

Applying Business as Missions to the Hospitality Industry

Within the world of business, various elements and factors exist that significantly affect the way that a business is run. Marketing, human resources, accounting, operations, and management are simply a small sampling of components that must be present for the establishment of any company. Though these components must be present, other factors exist that influence the business structure. All companies must belong to either the category of for-profit or non-profit organizations (Bahgi & Gabrielle, 2013). In the way that various business components must be addressed in for-profit organizations, these factors must also be addressed in non-profit organizations (Danna & Porche, 2008).

Much can be considered when looking into the sector of non-profit organizations as non-profits can take many forms. Non-profits are organizations that exist for the purpose of achieving a mission and are “not existing or done for the purpose of making a profit” (Nonprofit definition, 2015, para. 1). Organizations with religious affiliation fit into the category of non-profit due to the characteristics that they possess (Tweet, 2013). While a non-profit organization is a specific form of business structure, non-profits can exist in virtually every industry. The industry to which a company belongs will impact the way that a business is structured. This is because specific industries have unique characteristics and properties that must be considered if a company desires to remain competitive in the market. One example of a specific industry is the hospitality industry. In order to stand up to the competition in the hospitality industry, a company must understand the ins and outs of this industry along with consumer demands.

Business as Missions

Non-profit organizations can take on a variety of different forms. One of these forms is a business used for missions. A Business as Missions (BAM) organizations is “about real, viable, sustainable, and profitable businesses; with a kingdom of God purpose, perspective, and impact; leading to transformation of people and societies spiritually, economically, and socially—to the greater glory of God” (Tunehag, 2006, p. 3). Though all businesses used for missions have the intended purpose of furthering the kingdom and bringing Him glory, depending on the industry and the business strategy, these companies will vary in structure and practices. According to Hedley (2012), there are a number of different forms that BAMs can take. Tentmaking, which involves using secular businesses for outside ministry, marketplace ministries, and enterprise development are among the various forms of which BAMs can be a part. Although diverse business strategies exist for BAMs, there are some characteristics that are consistent throughout all. Often BAMs include daily prayer, assembling care packages, accountability, and internal employee support (Hedley, 2012). These common characteristics are essential for the success of a BAM as they can only be truly successful if they are reliant on the Father (Adams & Sherlock, 2010).

Various forms of Business as Missions

Tentmaking. The concept of tentmaking originated with the apostle Paul in the New Testament. Tentmaking involves using practical work as a vehicle for opening the door to establish relationships and financially support the mission of reaching others for Christ (Malone, 2014). This form of business allows both individuals and companies to make an impact on communities without having to be supported financially by individuals or a church. Utilizing tentmaking as a strategy in the hospitality industry will

allow a company to be able to focus on achieving the mission of reaching others for Christ instead of simply focusing on generating a profit. Tentmaking also provides hospitality businesses with freedom and independence to establish a unique missional company without borders or restrictions from outside influences.

Three basic elements ought to be present in tentmaking ministries if they are to be effective. These components include identifying with the people that the company wants to reach, building credibility, and modeling how to live a Christian life to others (Malone, 2014). Each of these three components can be addressed by the human resource department of a company. It is the human resource department that is responsible for the hiring of employees, and it is the employees that will ultimately carry out these three elements of a tentmaking business. The employees are responsible for building relationships, which is critical in order for a business to accomplish a specific mission. In order to connect these three factors with building relationships, the company needs to establish a culture of trust by hiring and properly training the right employees (Mizera, 2013).

There are certain properties that tentmaking companies possess that create the possibility for success in achieving a specific mission. One of the most important factors that tentmaking allows is access. Tentmaking can be utilized in any country to impact any person (Malone, 2014). In regards to the hospitality industry, this is particularly significant because the hospitality industry exists in nearly every country, much like tentmaking businesses. This is further significant because of the recent trend in business towards globalization. The strategy of tentmaking becomes increasingly important as the need continues to grow with growing globalization (Moon, 2008). Unlike traditional full-

time missionaries, tentmaking is able to more sensitively, creatively, and practically meet local and cultural issues in countries all over the world (Moon, 2008). Further, tentmaking eliminates the common dichotomy between sacred and secular, and rather synthesizes these two concepts together as a means to more effectively connect with the individuals that are trying to be reached (Malone, 2014).

Marketplace ministry. While tentmaking can be an exceptionally effective way to utilize business and use it for missions, there are other strategies that are also effective that can be utilized. Marketplace ministry has many parallels with tentmaking; however, it is less structured and less formal than tentmaking ministry. In marketplace ministry, an individual aims to establish relationships with others in a secular workplace (Kam-hon, McCann, & Yuen, 2013). After building relationships, the concept follows that doors will be opened for that individual to share the gospel and evangelize with coworkers. Should a hospitality company choose to use this strategy, both Christian and non-Christian employees may be hired as a means to do ministry. In order for marketplace ministry to be effective, a working knowledge of the marketplace must be both sufficient and relevant (Johnson, 2003). Like tentmaking, marketplace ministry has a particularly strong opportunity in today's current culture because of the increase in globalization (Johnson, 2003). The idea of marketplace ministry can be seen in Colossians 3:23 (English Standard Version). The verse reads, "Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men." Living out the Christian life in a secular workplace can be one of the most simple, yet effective ways to utilize business and use it for missions. It is the mature believers that should be striving to fight against the division of secular and sacred so that Christ is being glorified everywhere (Kam-hon, McCann, & Yuen, 2013).

Micro-enterprise development. Micro-enterprise development is yet another avenue to utilize business as a mission field. In micro-enterprise development, businesses come alongside individuals that are financially poor or struggling and help them to begin their own businesses as a way to support themselves and generate an income (Vargas, 2000). Instead of simply providing monetary gifts to these individuals, micro-enterprise development offers business training and small loans to meet needs in a more practical manner. More so than tentmaking or marketplace ministries, micro-enterprise development is focused heavily on the health of the community (Lockwood, 2013). Specifically, needs and issues are recognized and addressed through the establishment of these new enterprises (Lockwood, 2013). These enterprises are developed with the economy, community, and environment in mind (Vargas, 2000). Because community involvement is heavily demanded by consumers in the hospitality industry, opportunities are present in regards to micro-enterprise development. One way for the hospitality industry to utilize this ministry method is to partner with these new businesses as a way that supports the community and ministers to new business owners. Micro-businesses are able to utilize business for missions by meeting needs in practical ways and opening doors to build relationships and share the gospel in those relationships. As Johnson (2009) points out, BAMs are about meeting spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. In this way, micro-enterprise development is able to minister to others in a way that has the potential to further the kingdom of God.

Unique Characteristics of Business as Missions

Due to the unique nature of business as missions, there are a number of unique laws and regulations that must be upheld in order to remain a legal business. Though

discrimination is nearly always illegal in the human resource practices of a company, there are a few exceptions. These exceptions can be categorized as bona fide occupational qualifications, or BFOQs. A BFOQ can be described as “a defense to acknowledged discrimination” (Legal discrimination, 2002, para. 2). The topic of BFOQs is further discussed in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It states that an organization is legally able to discriminate “on the basis of his religion, sex, or national origin in those certain instances where religion, sex, or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of that particular business or enterprise” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1964, para. 23). Due to the nature of businesses that are used as ministries, it is possible to create BFOQs so that employees of the organization align with the principles and beliefs of that organization. However, if the proper procedures and paper work are not followed then legal issues could arise. This factor is critical for owners and managers to keep in mind when working in a business that it used for missions.

Perhaps the greatest factor that sets a business used for missions apart from other forms of business is the mission and vision of the company. Businesses used for mission are created with a very specific goal and purpose in mind, and this can be seen through the mission and vision of the business. BAMs are unique in that they can be utilized in an innumerable amount of ways to further the kingdom of God (Adams & Sherlock, 2010). These types of businesses are an opportunity to establish and accomplish a specific goal that is focused on the kingdom of God. Often individuals think of missions as going overseas with a specific mission board; however, that does not always have to be the

case. When Christians choose to go into business, it becomes a mission field for them (Adams & Sherlock, 2010).

A business that is used as missions has two main components. There is the business portion of the company, and there is the mission of the business. The most ideal approach to having an effective business used for missions is to combine both missions and business in a holistic manner (Adams & Sherlock, 2010). This essentially means that everything about the company is integrated together to work as one. While the actual running of the business is critical, focus on the Scripture, prayer, and fasting cannot be denied (Adams & Sherlock, 2010). Johnson (2009) sums up this principle by stating that, “At its heart it is a holistic mission strategy carrying the love and gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and hurting world through the vehicle of business and the relationship created in that enterprise” (p. 38). Both components are absolutely essential for a business to truly be used for missions.

The trend toward increasing globalization has a significant impact upon how these various strategies are carried out in BAMs. As cultures and people change and adapt with time, so does business. Globalization is growing and changing the face of business (Dunning, 2014). As globalization is growing and is becoming a stronger force in the world of business, internationalism is growing in a direct relationship with that globalization (Brooks & Becket, 2011). It has been said that if a company is not evolving then it is dying (Taylor, 2015). In order for a company to effectively evolve it must be adapting to changing consumer demands as well as adjusting to match the current culture and environment. This adaption is important for the hospitality industry as well as consumers are beginning to demand more community involvement, corporate social

responsibility, and social interaction. One way to avoid the death of a business is to be up to date with the changing world and the affects that international business has on the business world as a whole. An active understanding of how globalization affects ministry and individual industries it critical for companies to understand if they are to be effective in achieving their intended mission.

Before exploring specific industries, it is essential to understand one of the most critical factors of effective BAMs. Though all companies can benefit from emphasizing people over profits, this is especially important for BAMs. Evidence reveals that companies are more successful when there is a focus on both people and trust (Housego, 2008). When it comes to non-profits, most of the current problems do not exist with the businesses themselves but rather with the people that are failing to view and value people as God does (Baers, 2006). Baers goes on to point out that there are certain actions that should be taken in a business being used for missions to ensure that it is functioning in such a way that brings glory to God. BAMs should focus on providing for people, respecting them, giving clear expectations to employees, protecting them, developing and nurturing them, listening to them, speaking the truth to them, and getting to know them (Baers, 2006). The importance of valuing people pours over into treatment of both employees and customers alike.

The Hospitality Industry

Characteristics of the Hospitality Industry

As previously noted, a variety of unique industries exist to which a business can belong. This is true also for non-profit organizations. Depending on which industry the non-profit occupies will greatly impact the way that the company is operated. Hospitality

is one specific industry to be considered in the business realm. There are a number of different characteristics of the hospitality industry that should be understood when considering a company in this industry. The hospitality industry is one of the largest industries as it reaches every country and generates nearly one trillion dollars annually (Brooks & Becket, 2011). Not only is the hospitality industry large, but it is also growing as people are spending more nights in hotels and other lodging and are investing more time and money into other activities that belong to this industry (Slattery, 2002). When considering this industry Slattery (2002) points out that “the basic function of hospitality is to establish a relationship or to promote the exchange of good and services, both material and symbolic, between those who give hospitality and those who receive it” (p. 20). Because of this primary function to establish relationships, there is much opportunity for a business to utilize this industry for missions.

A number of specific characteristics should be considered when taking a look at the hospitality industry. This particular industry operates in its own unique way and an understanding of how this industry functions is critical to ensure success. One of the first things that is unique about this industry is that consumers are not only buying products, but they are also buying services and facilities (Slattery, 2002). This is especially important to note because customer loyalty is the main driving force in the hospitality industry (Korte, Ariyachandra, & Frolic, 2013). Though it is important in every industry to understand consumer demands, it is exceptionally important in hospitality because of the weight that customer loyalty plays. All businesses in the hospitality industry need to be aware of customer preferences through market research (Korte, et al., 2013). Failure to recognize consumer demand will result in the company failing to be relevant or

competitive. This will then result in the company failing to be effective as a BAM as it will not be able to achieve its established mission.

Since customer loyalty is such a significant factor in the hospitality industry, customers' perceptions of any given company are significant as well. A number of different elements affect the way that a customer perceives a company. Service quality is one component of hospitality that can drive customer views. A company is able to enhance customer views through service quality by focusing on human resource practices. The reason for this is that when employees have greater job satisfaction they in turn do better work, including better customer service (Garlick, 2010). Along with job satisfaction, there are other ways that management can increase positive customer perceptions through human resources. Empowering employees is one way that customers' perceptions of service quality increases (Line & Runyan, 2012). As employees are empowered they put more effort into their jobs and take more initiative, which results in better quality service. As customers are more satisfied with the level of quality service, greater opportunities arise for the hospitality BAM to effectively minister.

Another way that customer perceptions come into play is in the area of corporate social responsibility (Line & Runyan, 2012). In recent years, there is an increasing trend towards consumers not only desiring corporate social responsibility, but also demanding it. Over 88% of consumers believe that it is both the duty and responsibility of companies to do business in such a way that will benefit both society and the environment (Epstein-Reeves, 2010). Corporate social responsibility is quickly changing from being an optional business decision to a mandated one. For a company to truly be successful in generating

profits and achieving its mission it must sufficiently meet consumer demands, and corporate social responsibility is one of them. Another way that corporate social responsibility comes into play with consumer perceptions is because of trust. The greater that a consumer is able to trust a company the greater the likelihood of that company succeeding. The way that a company addresses social and environmental issues can greatly affect customer perceptions of a business being a trustworthy establishment (Baghi & Gabrielli, 2013). As has been noted, trust is essential if a business in the hospitality industry is to be effective in furthering the kingdom of God.

A unique quality of the hospitality industry is its ability to connect with and utilize the community to which it belongs. Hospitality businesses are able to capitalize on a community by taking advantage of the different cultural differences, music, shows, and history of that community (Gnuschke, 2007). Society and hospitality are closely linked because hospitality can act as a lens through which to view and understand society (Morrison & O’Gorman, 2008). This is because hospitality gets to the core of peoples’ most basic needs of food and shelter. Understanding what consumers demand for hospitality reveals insights into how a society functions as a whole.

Types of Companies in the Hospitality Industry

Within the hospitality industry there are many types of businesses that should be noted. Each of these different types of companies can be utilized for missions if the company is effectively established and structured. Included in the hospitality industry are hotels, motels, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, inns, hostels, and more. One of the newest and most unique forms of hospitality is the hostel. Some characteristics of hostels that are common throughout include share living space, common rooms, low prices, and short-

term stays (Timothy & Teye, 2009). While this is the core of what a hostel looks like as a business, there are many other components of a hostel that make it a particularly good fit to be utilized for missions.

Emphasis on Hostels

Consumer Demands for Hostels

The first characteristic of hostels that should be considered is the clientele. A vast majority of guests that stay in hostels are backpackers. Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) describe a backpacker as a “budget-minded tourist who exhibit a preference for inexpensive accommodation, [with] an emphasis on meeting other people” (p. 50). Knowing who the customer is is important for the company to understand because it will reveal who to target and what the market demands for the company truly are. Social interaction is a critical aspect for most backpackers, and hostels are the most common place for backpackers to receive that interaction (Murphy, 2001). The reason that hostels are the most common place for this interaction is because backpackers are able to connect with other guests because of their communal nature (Murphy, 2001). Communication and community are highly valued in this industry. Further, not only do backpackers want to connect with other travelers, but they also want to connect and communicate with locals (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995).

Closely tied to the clientele of a hostel is the characteristic of hostels to promote social interaction. Borovskaya and Dedova (2014) also point out that “a key feature intrinsic for the majority of hostels’ customer is demand for social interaction and gaining new experiences” (p. 138). Because consumers are demanding social interaction, it is critical for hostels to have an understanding of that demand and how to best address it.

Failure to meet this demand will result in the hostel not being able to remain competitive in the market. This particular characteristic of hostels is what really sets them apart from other companies in the hospitality industry. Unlike hotels and motels, hostels allow for communication between management, guests, and outside organizations (Borovskaya & Dedova, 2014). Because of this close interaction with people, hostel guests expect that the staff will treat them in a friendly manner (Murphy, 2001). Hostels must have a firm grasp on the importance of people if they are to be successful, both as a company and as a ministry. Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) go as far to say that “communication between customers is the hallmark of hostels” (para. 1). Because of the value of communication to hostel guests, hostels have significant opportunities to turn what may be an ordinary hostel into a non-profit, missional hostel that is used to reach people with the gospel.

As it has been identified that hostels have a central focus on communication and interaction, it is critical to understand what elements promote or enhance those interactions. One of the most importance factors aiding to increased collaboration is ambience (Borovskaya & Dedova, 2014). Guests that come to hostels looking to interact with others have specific expectations in mind. A majority of hostel guests reveal that a hostel should be comfortable and relaxed. Along with this desired ambience comes the responsibility of the hostel to recognize that it has a role to play in creating this environment (Murphy, 2001). Communication networks are important in this industry so it is vital that the ambience of the hostel is adding to these networks rather than taking away from them (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Though BAMs are not primarily concerned with generating profit, it is still essential that they are meeting the wants and desires of consumers. Failure to do so will result in failure of the company.

Noting that hostels play a role in adding to the atmosphere of the establishment, certain strategies should be considered. Evidence reveals that hostel guests are actively willing to participate in social gatherings at the hostel as well as hostel run events (Borovskaya & Dedova, 2014). Because of this a hostel should utilize its ability to create events that will promote communication and allow for backpackers and other guests to fulfil their demand of social interaction. Successfully creating events is one way that a hostel can remain competitive in the market. The physical layout of the building is another factor for hostels to consider. Physical space for interaction must be present in order for social interaction to actually take place (Borovskaya & Dedova, 2014). These spaces can take many different forms. Found in many hostels are community kitchens, common areas, and work spaces (Murphy, 2001). Utilizing physical space can be an excellent way to promote communication.

Opportunities for Hostels to be Effective for Ministry

Customer Service. Because communication is such an integral aspect of hostels, hostels lend themselves to being used effectively for ministry as a BAM. In order for a hostel to be effectively utilized, it must meet customer demands. Though the mission of a non-profit hostel will be more intentional than a for-profit hostel, meeting customer demands is essential no matter what because without customer support the company cannot exist. As previously noted, superior customer service is one consumer demand that must be met. In order for excellent customer service to be attained it must meet the expectations of the customer rather than the company (Smith & Harbisher, 1989). When it comes to a hostel being used for missions its customer service should stand apart from the competition. The most basic way for a BAM to set itself apart with service quality is

to go the extra mile (Dubinsky & Skinner, 2002). Going the extra mile involves the idea of going above and beyond what is standard or expected. It also involves an active attentiveness to customer needs. This again is where human resource practices come into play.

In order for employees to go above and beyond for a customer, they must first be willing to offer excellent customer service. Hiring the right individuals for a company is vital. With effective hiring, training, and motivation of employees, any company can be suitable to accomplish incredible goals (Johnson, 2009). The opposite is also true. If a company fails to hire and train the right individuals then the company will be severely stunted and achieving its mission. In order to properly hire individuals for the business, the business must first have a firm grasp on what the mission and vision are. After establishing the mission and vision, then the company needs to determine what characteristics are essential for the carrying out of specific goals. Only then will a company be able to correctly hire individuals to administer superior customer service. It is through HR that a company is able to have the basis for using a business for the glory of God (Johnson, 2009).

Technology. Technology integration is another consumer demand that hostels should consider. As consumers are demanding technology more and more, companies must remain relevant by adapting with the digital world (LaSalle, 2013). This demand also ties in closely with excellent customer service as a company has the opportunity to improve customer service by integrating technology through applications or other digital offerings (Korte, et al., 2013). Though this demand is present for all companies whether for-profit or non-profit, Christian or secular, missional hostels must understand this

demand fully because of the incredible potential the lies in this field. Technology is one of the quickest and simplest ways to reach many people in a short period of time with a specific message. Being able to utilize technology can greatly help a business in the hospitality industry to more effectively achieve its mission of reaching individuals for Christ.

Corporate Social Responsibility. Along with the demand for superior customer service and more technology is the demand for corporate social responsibility. It has already been noted that 88% of consumers believe that companies should actively participate in corporate social responsibility (Epstein-Reeves, 2010). However, the demand does not stop there. Evidence also reveals that 55% of consumers are willing to pay more for products and services where the company supports the environment and social issues (“Press Room,” 2014). This reveals that consumers are willing to act on the actions that they are demanding. Though corporate social responsibility is a way to meet consumer demand, it is also a way for a company in the hospitality industry to bring glory to God. In the very first chapter of the Bible, in Genesis 1:26b, God said, “Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God gave man dominion over all the earth. He has given man stewardship over it and expects his people to take care of it. This, however, only addresses the issue of the environment. The Lord also has something to say about caring for others. In James 1:27 it says, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” God also mandated that as believers we are taking care of those who are less fortunate. In these

ways a company that is striving to be used for missions cannot neglect their role in corporate social responsibility.

Low Prices. While the demands for high service quality, increased technology, and corporate social responsibility can apply to any industry, there are certain demands that are unique to the hospitality industry that should be considered. Specific to a hostel is the demand for low prices. In contrast to hotels or motels, hostels belong to the low-priced segment of the industry (Borovskaya & Dedova, 2014). Low price is not just desired, but is rather an expectation for a hostel. When considering using a hostel as a business for missions, one of the most important factors in being successful is the ability that the hostel has to actually draw in people. If prices are too high and customers are unwilling to pay, then the hostel does not even have the opportunity to accomplish its mission of reaching people for Christ. Studies reveal that price is a key motivator when selecting a hostel (Hecht & Martin, 2006). In order for a missional hostel to have a mission field to minister to it must have adequately low prices to get customers through the door.

Community. The most prominent and unique demand for a hostel to meet is the demand for community. Borovskaya and Dedova (2014) points out that “the paradox of a hostel as an accommodation form is that the basic need of a hostels’ customer is not sleep, but communication, socialization, impressions, and experience” (p. 143). This demand creates the perfect platform for a hostel to be used for missions. However, the only way for a hostel to be able to utilize this demand is to meet it. Social interaction occurs when individuals gather together and communicate with one another (Murphy, 2001). Due to this demand, it would be wise for a hostel to create a variety of events and

spaces to encourage communication among guests. Some possible hostel events include open mic nights, poetry readings, local concerts, or in the case of a hostel being used for ministry, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and discussions on spiritual topics. Developing these different social gatherings will allow the hostel to meet the need for social interaction while building relationships with guests and opening the door to sharing the gospel with them.

Hostel events are great opportunities to connect with individuals; however, they are not the only possibility for meeting the demand for social interaction. Another unique quality of most hostels is that they connect strongly with the local community. Not only do these hostels connect to the community, but many hostels also give back to the community (Hostelling International, 2013). By being involved in the community and the various events and social issues that occur within that community, hostels are able to enhance individuals' ability to collaborate with others. One specific way that this occurs is through partnerships with other businesses and initiatives. A large number of hostels give back to the community by partnering with charities, trusts, and activities as an effort to rebuild and support the community (Hostel Hub, 2014). The movement to be involved and give back to the community works to tie a number of different demands and social trends together. It serves to partner corporate social responsibility with the demand for social interaction and community. This reveals the significance of hostels choosing to actively be involved in the local community.

Strategies for Meeting Consumer Demand

Branding. The ability of a hostel to meet consumer demands is one of the most significant factors when looking to establish a successful company. Meeting demand,

however, is not the only factor that goes into success. Evidence reveals that nonprofits are most successful when they are functioning as a brand. Another way to look at branding is to note that effective companies establish relationships and trust with its customers (Mizera, 2013). Establishing a strong brand is not just an important issue for for-profit organizations, it is also a critical factor for nonprofits as well. Strong branding allows a company to have a competitive advantage over its competitors, which is critical to remain successful (Kim, 2002). Having a strong brand is important for all businesses; however, it is especially important for a nonprofit hostel because companies with strong brands have more opportunities to promote their cause and achieve their mission more effectively (Baghi & Gabrielli, 2013).

A number of strategies exist for creating a strong brand image that should be considered. One way to promote a strong brand is through cause-related marketing. Cause-related marketing involves giving a specific portion of profits to a cause or foundation. This positively impacts consumer purchasing as it positively affects consumer perceptions of a company (Baghi & Gabrielli, 2013). In order for strong branding to occur a company must clearly communicate their brand image by developing branding programs and revealing to consumers what the mission of the company is (Mizera, 2013). The reason that clear communication is so critical to the branding process is because brand awareness is the foundation of the customer-based brand equity pyramid (Baghi & Gabrielli, 2013). People are willing to pay more when a company possesses a strong brand. If a hostel wants to truly take advantage of its platform and meet demands in a specific way, then it must invest time and money into creating a strong and visible brand.

Ethics. While discussing demand shifters and branding is vital to consider when looking at a missional hostel, it is also important to consider the ethical implications that are involved with BAMs. At its core, ethics is knowing the difference between right and wrong and choosing to do what is right (Baers, 2006). Though business ethics is important for all types of businesses, whether Christian or secular, there is a particular significance for Christian organizations because of the commitment to glorify God through business. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” All things are to be done to the glory of God, and that includes ethical business practices. There are three main areas where unethical practices may occur. These areas to be aware of include in the actual operations of the business, in relations with employees, and in the company’s relationship with the local community (Mitzen, 1998). Essentially, ethics affects every aspect of a company. If a hostel is desiring to be used for missions in a way that reaches people for Christ then having ethical business practices is a non-negotiable. Trust is one of the driving factors behind a consumer supporting a company, and if ethics are not an integral part of the business then it cannot succeed in achieving its mission.

Food Service. Though there are many different strategies that should be acknowledged when establishing a missional hostel the practical aspects of the business cannot be ignored. One of the most practical components of a hostel is food service. Most hostels contain a café or coffee shop as a part of the business. BAMs are all about meeting spiritual, emotional, and physical needs (Johnson, 2009). Providing food for guests is one of the most simplistic ways of meeting practical needs. Not only does providing food meet practical needs, but it also brings together a number of different

processes (Morrison & O’Gorman, 2008). In its most basic form, this means that food provides an open door for people to be more vulnerable and open up on a deeper level. As a hostel, integrating food is an excellent way of building relationships and making connects with others. This is because “the provision of food, drink, and accommodation represents an act of friendship, it creates symbolic ties between people which establish bonds between those involved in sharing hospitality” (Slattery, 2002, p. 20). A hostel should seriously consider the way that it is utilizing the food industry in their business for ministry. While food allows for connections to be made within the hostel, food can also be used as a way to minister externally from the organization. With any business dealing with food service there will be food that goes unpurchased or unused. One way for the hostel to minister is to take left over food and give it to partnering organizations such as soup kitchens or other Christian ministries.

Ambience. Another practical factor to consider is the ambience and space of the hostel. Ambience has become an increasingly importance issue to address in the hospitality industry (Heide, Laerdal, & Groenhaug, 2007). One goal for a hostel to consider is making the atmosphere tranquil and relaxing (Heide, et al., 2007). There are a number of ways to accomplish this goal. Choosing neutral colors, comfortable furniture, and calm music are just a few elements that can add to creating a comfortable ambience. One example of a company that stands out for achieving a relaxing ambience is Starbucks (Biehl-Missal & Saren, 2012). In this article on ambience by Biehl-Missal and Saren (2012) the authors point out that Starbucks has achieved a “seductive consumption atmosphere” because they were able to create an aesthetically pleasing environment (para. 1). Along with colors, furniture, and music a hostel should consider the aesthetics

of the environment. This can include artwork, furniture placement, and other decorations. Focusing on the ambience of the hostel will allow the hostel to maximize its ability to bring in the most customers and to connect with the greatest amount of people. This will in turn allow the hostel to most effectively achieve its mission of reaching people for Christ and glorifying God in the process.

In the same way that the ambience of the company can impact the hostels ability to minister, so can the actual utilization of the property. In other words, a hostel can use the business to minister by opening up the physical building to the local community by creating space for conferences, church events, prayer meetings, Bible studies, workshops, parties, and more. Many hotels and other hospitality businesses make conference rooms available for the local community to utilize (“51st NATS National Conference”, 2010). Designing a space for the local community to utilize creates opportunities to connect with both individuals and companies. This then creates more opportunities for the hostel to connect with the community and to have more opportunities to accomplish the mission of reaching the community for Christ. In recent years hotels have increasingly become more involved in the community (Suharto & Damanik, 2012). This trend reveals that there is opportunity for hostels to also utilize conference room space to become more involved in the community.

Christian Literature. Another practical action that hostels can take to be impacting others for Christ through business is the provision of Christian literature. Humphrey (2012) points out that while the Bible cannot be replaced and is extremely important, Christian literature can impact and affect people in ways like nothing else can. Included in Christian literature is pamphlets, tracts, and Christian books. Providing either

free literature or access to literature can be a powerful way for a hostel to get their message across in a noninvasive way and on the time table of the recipient. This may also include directing individuals to various blogs, podcasts, or websites that can be helpful for those inquiring about Christianity (Humphrey, 2012). When desiring to use a business for missions it is important that the company is taking advantage of every opportunity possible to reach people for Christ as this will promote the overall mission of the company and more easily allow for goals to be reached.

Market Research. In order for a hostel to accomplish its goal of reaching others for Christ it must be doing effective ministry. Ministry will only be effective if it is meeting the needs and demands of its customers. Though doing online research can provide insight into market demand shifters doing primary research, such as customer surveys, can allow a company to grasp a better understanding of how to best minister to guests. Surveys are particularly helpful because they are “flexible, can deal with a wide range of data types, and once the survey tool has been produced and piloted, it can provide large quantities of data from a variety of settings” (Norrie, 2007, p. 94). Another positive aspect of surveys is that they can be statistically analyzed and easily interpreted to inform the company about the direction that it should head (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1995). Surveys will provide helpful insight to reveal further practical steps that a hostel can take to remain both competitive and effective.

Understanding Worldview. Lastly, in order to be effectively utilizing a hostel for ministry it is essential for the company to understand the worldview and mindsets of customers. Because a hostel is so centered on community and conversation, knowing how guests think and feel is important to understand so that appropriate and effective

conversations can take place. The thought process that most closely represents the current perspective of the majority of Americans is post-modernism (Smith, 1995).

Postmodernism has been defined as a “late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power” (Duignan, 2014, para. 1). In contrast to other eras throughout history, in postmodernist times individuals believe that truth is relative and that what is right for one individual may not be for another. This drastically impacts the way that a hostel should go about ministry. If this is a commonly held belief, then when entering into conversations the issue of absolute truth must be addressed first. Failure to recognize that there is absolute truth will result in circular arguments and stagnation.

Business provides incredible opportunities to impact others for the cause of Christ. Through business individuals and companies can be influenced and reached in ways that would not otherwise be possible. Though there are many unique industries that business can utilize, the hospitality industry provides many unique opportunities to utilize a business for missions because of its focus on relationships and community. Further breaking down the hospitality industry, there are a variety of specific business structures to be considered. More so than any other hospitality business, a hostel has great opportunity to make connects as consumers are demanding social interaction and connectivity. When considering using a hostel for missions, a number of factors must be considered in order to be most effective and to remain competitive. If a company is able to appropriately analyze these different components and move forward in the right

direction to meet needs and demands of consumers then the mission of reaching others for Christ is possible.

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