



SERVICE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH CHECKING PROGRAM OF THABO CROWN PRINCE HOSPITAL, THABO, NONGKHAI PROVINCE

Patidta Mathassakul¹

Ruchirat Patanathabutr²

¹ *Master student, Master of Business Administration Program, College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University*

² *Assistant Professor, College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University*

Abstract

Independent study intended to analyze the environmental management, to study the demographic data of the customers, their behavior, their opinions and different levels of opinion on the marketing mix factors that can be used to develop service marketing strategies for the checkup programs of the health examination division at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province. The data were collected by interview the manager and staff of the health examination division and questionnaire to collect data form 580 sample. The data were analyzed and calculated in term of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation. The study found that general information of customers, 53.79% of customers are female and 96.38% of them are Thai. In addition, 49.48% of them are 40-60 years old and 36.03% of them are 20-40 years old. While 30.52% of them have 4 members in the family and 25.00% of them possess 3 members in the family, 36.90% of them completed a bachelor's degree and 21.55% of them finished high school education/high vocational education. As 31.55% of them work as government officials/retired government officials and 26.03% of them are sellers/business owners, 23.79% of them have an average monthly income of 9,000-15,000 baht, while 19.66% of them earn less than 9,000 baht per month and 18.62% of them make 15,000-20,000 baht per month, respectively. The customers themselves have an influence on the decision making and most of them have the checkup once or twice a year. The average expense for each health checkup of most customers is no more than 2,000 baht and have never purchased the checkup packages. To choose the places for their health checkups, they consider the hospitals with good reputation and reliability, specialist physicians, convenient location, friendly and polite medical staff and modern medical devices. The customers of different customer types, genders, nationalities, age groups, numbers of family members, careers and monthly incomes have the same level of opinion on the service marketing mix factors influencing their decision making on the place for their health examination with a significant statistical difference ($P > 0.05$). However, the customers of different education levels possess different levels of opinion on the overall marketing mix factors with a significant statistical difference ($P < 0.05$).

Keywords: checkup program, Marketing Mix

Introduction

Since 2004, the government and the Ministry of Public Health have been working on developing Thailand into an international medical hub. The development has focused on raising the standards, improving the quality and increasing the capability to be able to compete with other competitors in the health service business [1]. As people are increasingly interested in their health and they are required to have various types of checkups, such as medical checkups for new students and health checkups for new employees as defined in the Labor Protection Act 1998 [2], it has resulted in the growth of medical service business and an increase in the competitive of medical service business. According to the 2008 juristic person database of the Department of Business Development [3], during the 5-year period from 2004-2008, the growth rate of private medical examination and health checkup business was 12.47% each year, while the income growth rate was 21.54% each year. Thabo Crown Prince Hospital aims to provide high quality and safe medical services that meet the customer needs. Although Thabo Crown Prince Hospital is a government hospital, the hospital is ready and capable of providing the customers with high quality medical examination and health checkup services under the supervision of the department of marketing and product development. As for the current situation, the medical service business is highly competitive; therefore, it is important to understand the customer needs and come up with the solution to appropriately satisfy their needs.

These are the reasons why the environment of management, customer behavior and their opinions on the marketing mix factors influencing their decision making on the place for their health examination are

important for the creating service marketing strategies for the medical examination division to provide the

customers with great satisfaction and convince them to come back for the services.

Objectives

In this study of the service marketing strategies for the checkup programs of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the environment of management, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of health checkup services at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital.
2. To study the demographic data of the customers.
3. To study behavior of the customers.
4. To study customer opinions and different levels of customer opinion on the marketing mix.
5. To study customer suggestions on the marketing.
6. To develop service marketing strategies for the checkup programs of the health examination division at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital.



Methodology

This study analyzes the environment of management, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of health checkup services at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, using an interview and brainstorming with the manager of marketing and service development and the staff. A questionnaire was used to obtain the information about customer behavior and customer opinions. This applied research adopted descriptive social science research methodology to interpret, analyze and assess the data and used descriptive analytical method to present the research [4]. In addition, descriptive statistics were employed to explain dispersion of the data, frequency, percentage, mean value and differences of variables, while inferential descriptive statistics were used to explain relations between the data and hypotheses and the method of inference was used to come to conclusions about the population [5].

1. Framework

The researcher had an interview and a brainstorming session with the manager and staff of the marketing and service development of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital. The interview questions were based on the theory of environment of management [6] and the brainstorming theory [7]. The 5 inputs include the information about the environment of management of health examination business, the opinions on the competitiveness with regard to the five forces model, the opinions on the general environment of health examination business regarding the PESTE analysis, the opinions on the external environment of health checkup services and the opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in health examination business at present. The researcher study the general information, behavior and opinions of the customers who have used the health checkup services and the target customers in Thabo District Municipality using a questionnaire constructed based on the theory of customer behavior, opinions and attitudes, the service marketing mix theory (8P's) and the generation theory. The opinions were measured using the Likert scale and the researcher used an index of item objective congruence (IOC) to examine the consistency of the questionnaire content. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher adopted the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In addition, the researcher used the sampling theory with 8 inputs. Including customer types, genders, nationalities, age groups, numbers of family members, education levels, careers and monthly incomes to obtain the information about customer behavior and opinions on factors influencing their decision making on the place for their health examination. The information was later used to develop the service marketing strategies of the checkup programs that are in line with the customer behavior, opinions and needs in order to increase the capability of the checkup services of the health examination division at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province.

2. Hypothesis

Customers of different customer types, genders, nationalities, age groups, numbers of family members, education levels, careers and monthly incomes have the same level of opinion on the service marketing mix factors influencing their decision making on the place for their health examination.

3. Scope of the study, population and samples

In this study, there are 2 sample groups, including the customers who have used the checkup services at the health examination division under the supervision of the department of marketing and product development of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital and the target customers in Thabo District Municipality, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province.

According to the 2014 database, there were averagely 126 customers who used the checkup services at the hospital each month. Therefore, the researcher collected the data from this group of customers in March with a sampling error of 5%. As a result, there are 94 customers in this sample group.

As for the target customers in Thabo District Municipality, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province, the researcher selected the samples in Thabo District Municipality which had a population of 18,254 people with a sampling error of 5%, resulting in 392 target customers in this sample group.

Since the data collection was conducted in March 2015, the researcher was able to collect the data from 175 customers who used the checkup services at the health examination division and 405 target customers living in Thabo District Municipality.

4. Research instruments and validation

The instruments used in this study are an interview and a questionnaire. To validate the constructed questionnaire, the researcher employed an index of consistency (IOC) to examine the quality of the research instrument by having 3 experts. The researcher assessed the reliability of the instrument with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

5. Data collection

The data was collected in March 2015 from the customers who have used the checkup services at the health examination division of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital and the target customers in Thabo District Municipality. The researcher used non-probability sampling and convenience or accidental sampling to select the samples.

After collecting the questionnaires from all respondents, the researcher reviewed the questionnaires and analyzed the data using a microcomputer. The researcher then used SPSS for Windows Version 19.0 to analyze statistical data, including percentage, mean value, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA.

6. Research conditions

The hypothesis testing was used to accept or reject the null hypothesis (H_0). The null hypothesis was accepted when the computed significant value was 0.05 or higher and the null hypothesis was rejected when the computed significant value was less than 0.05.

Results

1. Environmental analysis of the Division of Health Examination, Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

Regarding the analysis of environment of management, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the health checkup services, the researcher has found that there are



2 groups of customers, including old customers who have used the services and new customers who have never used the services before. The competitors of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital are private hospitals and government hospitals in nearby provinces. The medical examination division offers 2 health checkup programs and mainly advertises these programs by distributing leaflets at different spots in the hospital. The people providing the services in the division are registered nurses who can give medical information and suggestions. Considering the five forces model, the competitive rivalry within the industry is rated at the highest level, the threat of substitute products and the bargaining power of buyers are rated at the moderate level, and the threat of new entrants and the bargaining power of suppliers are rated at the low level. In terms of general environment concerning the 5 inputs, the politics, administration and law has both positive and negative impacts, while the economy, the technology, the society and culture and the physical evidence create favorable impacts. With regard to the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the external factor analysis summary (EFAS) was found with the weighted mean of 3.25, while the internal factor analysis summary (IFAS) was found with the weighted mean of 3.75. This information has revealed that the hospital can respond to the external factors slightly better than other organizations in the medical service industry. In comparing the strengths and weaknesses, the hospital can respond to the internal factors better than other organizations in the business.

2. Demographic information of customers of the Division of Health Examination, Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

According to the general information of customers who have used the checkup services at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, 53.79% of customers are female and 96.38% of them are Thai. In addition, 49.48% of them are 40-60 years old and 36.03% of them are 20-40 years old. While 30.52% of them have 4 members in the family and 25.00% of them possess 3 members in the family, 36.90% of them completed a bachelor's degree and 21.55% of them finished high school education/high vocational education. As 31.55% of them work as government officials/retired government officials and 26.03% of them are sellers/business owners, 23.79% of them have an average monthly income of 9,000-15,000 baht, while 19.66% of them earn less than 9,000 baht per month and 18.62% of them make 15,000-20,000 baht per month, respectively.

3. Behavior of customers of the Division of Health Examination, Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

In terms of the behavior of customers of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province, most of the respondents who are target customers have never used the health checkup services at the hospital create their own list of the health examinations, while most respondents who are old customers have the checkups because they want to have the annual checkups and have never purchased the checkup packages because they do not know that the packages are available. When they have to choose the tests themselves, most of them choose to have a diabetes screen, a renal/liver function screen and a urinary analysis, respectively. To choose the places for their health checkups, they consider the hospitals with good reputation and reliability, specialist physicians, convenient location, friendly and polite

medical staff and modern medical devices. For those who have used the services at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, they choose to use the services at this hospital due to good reputation and reliability, accurate and reliable results, convenient location, friendly and polite medical staff and specialist physicians. The customers themselves have an influence on the decision making and most of them have the checkup once or twice a year. For most of them, there is no specific date that is convenient for the customers to come to use the services, while many choose to use the services on weekdays. The average expense for each health checkup of most customers is no more than 1,000 baht and 1,000-2,000 baht, respectively. Most of them pay for the checkup services with cash. Most of them have searched for the information about the checkup services of at least one hospital and many of them never search for the information. Most customers knew the news of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital from word of mouth, which has made most customers choose to have their checkups at Thabo Crown Prince Hospital. In addition, once they have good experience with the checkup services, they tell other people sometimes and every time, respectively.

4. Customer opinions and different levels of customer opinion on the marketing mix of the Division of Health Examination, Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

The customers strongly agree that they choose the place for the checkups because of the convenient location, good reputation and reliability. In addition, the customers agree that they give precedence to specialist physicians in various fields, friendly and polite medical staff, availability of one stop service, a variety of examination choices, checkup report folders, checkup programs, accurate and reliable checkup results, the same standard of service for all, appropriate prices, clear price quotes presented prior to the checkups, fast service, alerts on appointments and reexaminations, modern medical devices, well-organized and clean service area, television/ the Internet provided during the waiting time, adequate parking space, drink and snack services, informative staff, advertisements and public relations activities through various media as well as discounts or premiums.

Considering the different levels of customer opinion on the marketing mix factors of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province, the researcher has found that customers of different customer types, genders, nationalities, age groups, numbers of family members, careers and monthly incomes have the same level of opinion on the service marketing mix factors influencing their decision making on the place for their health examination with a significant statistical difference ($P > 0.05$). However, the customers of different education levels possess different levels of opinion on the overall marketing mix affecting their choices of place for their checkups with a significant statistical difference ($P < 0.05$). In addition, the customers of different levels of education also possess different levels of opinion on promotion and physical evidence.

5. Customer suggestions on the marketing mix of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

The customers have suggested that physicians and nurses should be polite and attentive to customers and they should provide fast services.



6. Service Marketing Strategies of Health Checkup Programs at the Division of Health Examination, Thabo Crown Prince Hospital, Thabo District, Nong Khai Province

The TOWS Matrix was used to develop 2 strategies for the health examination division of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital. These 2 strategies are appropriate to the budget and can be implemented in 2015-2016. The W-T strategy includes a project on “Service Minded Staff” to create customer satisfaction and a project on “Careful Attention to Customers” to take care of the customers continuously. The W-O strategy refers to a project on “Healthy People” to increase the sales of the checkup packages and advertise the health examination division. After the implementation of these projects, it is expected that the marketing mix factors will be in line with customer behavior and customer opinions. As a result, the customer satisfaction with the service will be increased resulting in the word of mouth and the customers will come back to use the services again. The details of these 3 projects under the service marketing strategies of health examination program are listed in Table 1.

Conclusion

The results of this study are in line with the objectives and the results have been discussed based on the service marketing mix theory (8P’s) as follows:

Considering the products, most customers have never purchased the checkup programs and they usually choose to have a diabetes screen, a renal/liver function screen and a urinary analysis. Therefore, the checkup programs to be offered to the customers should include these tests. The customers tend to choose the hospitals with good reputation and reliability. This is in line with the study of Chamaiporn Poomkerd (2011) which has found that the factor affecting the decision to choose the service is favorable reputation of the hospitals [8]. There should have more public relations activities to advertise that the hospital has received the quality certificates in various areas. With respect to the price, the average expense for each health checkup of most customers is no more than 2,000 baht. Therefore, there should be small health check-up packages for the customers to choose from. The price of these packages may start from 500 baht. With regard to the channels of distribution, the customers have chosen to use the health examination services at the hospital which is located in their neighborhood and convenient for them to get to. This can be considered an opportunity for the health examination division as the target customers are in Thabo District. Most of the customers made their decisions to choose the hospital based on word of mouth. Therefore, it is important that the health examination division gives precedence to the services quality to the customers. Once the customers are satisfied with the services, they will pass on the information to others. On the subject of the promotion, the researcher has found that customers of different education levels have different levels of opinion about their choices of place for health examination services. Therefore, the health examination division of Thabo Crown Prince Hospital should increase the capability of staff for explaining and giving out information. There should be some public relations activities and special promotions to attract customers who have achieved lower than secondary education and who have

completed secondary education/vocational education and high school education/high vocational education. This has also appeared in the research conducted by Thawanrat Sangraphan (2013) that customers of different levels of education have different levels of opinion on purchasing the health checkup packages of private hospitals in Bangkok Metropolitan region with a statistically significant difference at 0.05 [9].

With regard to the procedures, the customers agree that the service of the health examination division is fast and there should be an alert service providing alerts on appointments and reexaminations. Therefore, the health institute should reconsider the current procedures and remove some unnecessary steps in order to provide the customers with faster services. Also, there should be a customer database to store customer history and contact information. Concerning the services, the customers have chosen to have their health checkups at this hospital because of specialist physicians and polite and friendly service staff. This conforms to the work of Thongthawat Boonfueang (2010) which has discovered that customers initially pay attention to staff or personnel [10]. Therefore, the service staff should be give opportunities to develop their potential in order to provide the customers with better services. For example, physicians and nurses should be supported to specialize in areas of medicine and they should be given opportunities to attend trainings or workshops to acquire new knowledge. In addition, medical staff at all levels should be provided with trainings on service behavior. Regarding the service quality, the customers agree that the health examination results from the hospital of their choice must be accurate and reliable. Also, the same standard of service should be delivered to all customers. Therefore, the hospital should apply for the quality certificate which indicates the reliability and accuracy of the medical examination results and this information should be informed to the customers. In addition, there should be guidelines on service standards that should be available to all. In terms of physical evidence, customers of different education levels have different levels of opinion on choosing the place for their health check-ups. Although the health check-up services already exist, the physical evidence should still be improved. For example, the Internet connection in the service areas should be fast and stable and drink and snack services should be provided in the areas that are visible to the customers.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for the organization

1.1 There should be regular follow-ups to evaluate the service quality and there should also be more contact channels for feedback and suggestions, such as hotlines and websites.

1.2 There should be public relations activities to introduce the service users, especially those in the service area, to the health examination division, the marketing department and the customer service centers.

1.3 There should be small health check-up packages which cost no more than 1,000 baht and there should be posters advertising these packages.



2. Suggestions for future studies

2.1 There should be more studies on factors affecting the services, such as attitudes or motivation of medical staff at all levels towards the operation performance.

2.2 There should be some studies on the expectation of service users about services provided by medical staff of which the results can be used in the service development process.

2.3 Some studies should be conducted with those who never have a health check-up or do not like to have health check-ups to explore related factors or their attitudes towards the check-ups.

2.4 Future studies should also include samples from Laos in order to obtain the information about the factors affecting their decisions on health check-up services which can be used to create the marketing mix factors that are directly in line with their opinions.

References

- [1] Government Strategic Information Center, National Statistical Office. (2015). Strategic Issues: The Readiness of Thai Public Health to Become Medical Hub. Retrieved on May 1, 2015, from <http://services.nic.go.th/gsic/strategy.php?ds=policy-24>.
- [2] Ruenroengwongse, R. (2013). Labor Protection Act 1998 amended in 2008 and 2010. Bangkok: Pim-Aksorn Printing.
- [3] Bureau of Foreign Business Administration, Department of Business Development. (2010). A Study on States and Competitiveness of Medical Examination and Health Check-up Business in Thailand. Retrieved on May 1, 2015, from <http://www.caii-thailand.com/sites/default/files/downloads/Health.pdf>.
- [4] Triola, M. F. (1995). Elementary Statistics. Sixth Edition. California: Addison-Wesley.
- [5] Salkind, N. J. (2003). Exploring Research. Fifth Edition. New Jersey: Pearson.
- [6] Teepapal, P. (2003). Strategic management. Bangkok: Amorn Printing.
- [7] Lertlumprasert, C. (2003). Brainstorming. Second Edition. Bangkok: Be Bright Books.
- [8] Poomkerd, C. (2011). Factors Affecting the Decision to Use Medical Service at Sripat Medical Center of Chiang Mai University of People in Muang District, Chiang Mai Province. Thesis. Master of Economics. Faculty of Economics. Chiang Mai University.
- [9] Sangraphan, T. (2013). Integrated Marketing Communication Factor Affecting Decision on the Purchase of Health-Checkup Package Provided by Hospital in Bangkok and Metropolitan Area. Independent Study. Master of Business Administration (Marketing). Faculty of Business. Ramkhamhaeng University.
- [10] Boonfueang, T. (2010). Consumer Behavior Towards Choosing Medical Technology Clinics in Mueang Chiang Mai District. Independent Study. Master of Business Administration (Marketing). Graduate School. Chiang Mai University.

Table 1 Projects under the service marketing strategies of health examination program

Project Name	Objective	Activities
Service Minded Staff Project	To create customer satisfaction with the service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize training sessions for the staff at all levels. 2. Set out practical guidelines for the staff. 3. Host a morning talk. 4. Have the customers rate the service quality. 5. Have the head of the department evaluation the staff's performance every 3 months.
Careful Attention to Customers Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To maintain the existing customer base 2. To provide additional channels to receive customers' opinions and suggestions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a customer profile for each staff to be responsible for. 2. Randomly call the customers to ask about their satisfaction and suggestions. 3. Set up hotlines and a website.
Healthy People Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase the sales of the checkup packages 2. To advertise the health examination division 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize promotional activities, such as increasing the number of health examination programs, selling health checkup vouchers, promoting membership cards to customers, and offering discounts and premiums. 2. Set up public relations activities, such as putting up billboards in the municipal areas, using radio broadcasts in the hospital, working with community radio stations and distributing leaflets.