

Marketing mix strategy for MICE in preparation for meeting package sales in Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal era

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Abstract: The aims of this study are to (1) analyze the MICE marketing mix strategy in selling meeting package planned by Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal and (2) formulate the MICE marketing mix strategy in preparing the meeting package sales at Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal. This study uses three key informants consisting of Assistant Director of Sales and Marketing Bintang Bali Resort, Account Director of The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Assistant Director of Event Services Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center. Data collection techniques used are observation, in-depth interviews and documentation studies. Data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions and testing the validity of the results with source triangulation. Based on the analysis done, there are two results showed, The first (1) the MICE marketing mix in planning the sales of meeting package on the new normal at Bintang Bali Resort was mostly well implemented. The second (2) Bintang Bali Resort needs to implement product strategies in the form of digital innovations such as procurement of hybrids and virtual meetings, utilizing digital promotion systems on social media to the fullest, making variations of meeting package based on hotels/venue comparisons can be improved in the future and pay attention to products with system using 4 R (reuse, reduce, recycle and replace) in sustainable environmental aspects in the new normal.

Keywords: marketing mix, meeting package, MICE, new normal

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Introduction

The rapid development of the hospitality industry requires hospitality stakeholders to be more creative in developing their business. The thing that hospitality stakeholders can do to be able to compete is to optimize marketing activities so that they can maintain their performance to achieve a certain level of growth. According to Kotler & Makens (2010:11) marketing is the art and science to discover, retain, and grow profitable customers. Companies can use marketing mix strategies to increase sales and attract consumers to buy the products and services offered. Marketing mix describes the set of tools that management can use to influence sales (Amelia and Rizky 2015). The marketing mix strategy includes product, place, price, promotion, physical evidence, people and processes. Marketing activities in the hospitality industry today cannot be carried out optimally, this is due to the Covid-19 that is sweeping the world. Covid-19 cases were first discovered in Indonesia on March 2, 2020, the addition of new cases every day caused the Indonesian government to carry out Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) on March 16, 2020 in several regions. According to the global economy, it has decreased due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in the first quarter of 2020 the national economy could only grow by 2.97% due to external influences from countries such as China which experienced the Covid-19 pandemic starting in early 2019 (Narto, Junianto, and HM 2022). On March 11, 2020 the WHO (World Health Organization) declared that Covid-19 had become a Pandemic. Since WHO announced that Covid-19 is a world pandemic, a very significant impact has had an effect on the economies of Indonesia and Bali, of course. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused tourism actors such as tourist attractions, hotels, restaurants, spas and entertainment to be closed to the public (Paramita and Putra 2020).

MICE is an acronym for Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition which consists of various hospitality service sectors including accommodation, food and beverages, catering, convention services, convention facilities, transportation, tourism, retail and entertainment (Buathong and Lai 2017). According to Kesrul (in Prayoga, 2020:29) said that MICE is a tourism activity whose activity is a combination of leisure and business which usually involves a group of people together. The MICE industry is one part of the hospitality industry that has also been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Based on data from the Indonesia Event Industry Council (Ivendo) in 2020, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) said that there were around 96.43% of events in 17 provinces that had to be postponed and another 84.20% were forced to cancel. Considering that the MICE industry has a great influence on other economic driving sectors, such as hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, travel agency agencies, site provider services, exhibition contractors, music and entertainment industries that automatically exert a strong influence on people's sources of income. Efforts to restore the MICE industry sector must be carried out, the government and business actors in this sector need to prepare a new strategy so that the MICE industry can be adapted to the new normal.

Research conducted by (Aburumman, 2020) shows that in terms of the MICE industry, it is necessary to maintain good work by using competencies, building modern communication systems and promoting digitalization in its business. Optimization of the 5 P marketing strategy is the best solution for survival and recovery strategy in the MICE industry. Meanwhile, the results of the research conducted by (Ranasinghe et al. 2020) in the MICE industry, this research suggests that the strategy that can be used is to implement virtual and hybrid events which can later be useful in increasing financial profits and increasing attendance. Research conducted by (Ho and Sia 2020) recovery strategies that can be applied by the MICE industry in the new normal era are strengthening health guidelines and 14 safety during the event, increasing offers to use virtual event platforms, using mobile applications to promote interaction with audiences, limiting international events and creating small events in a large venue.

Bintang Bali Resort is a five-star hotel located at Jalan Kartika Plaza, Tuban, Kuta. This hotel became one of the hotels affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, so they were forced to close hotel operations in April 2020. Bintang Bali Resort has target markets such as China, Indonesia, Australia, government, NGOs, private corporate and travel agents. The promotion system carried out by Bintang Bali Resort is to collaborate with several governments, NGOs, private corporates and travel agents in Bali. In achieving the previous level of sales, Bintang Bali Resort not only sells rooms but offers several packages such as meeting packages, lunch packages, dinner packages and wedding packages. Meeting package is the product that provides the highest income among all type of package offered by Bintang Bali Resort. Sales of meeting packages at Bintang Bali Resort have decreased and fluctuated in terms of inquiries, confirms and lost over the past three years.

Based on the results of an interview conducted with the Assistant Director of Sales &Marketing of Bintang Bali Resort, the decline was due to the tight competition with competitors who provided competitive prices, so Bintang Bali Resort had to reduce the price of meeting packages to increase sales volume in 2019. Bintang Bali Resort was forced to close hotel operations in April 2020 so that meeting package sales could only be optimized until March 2020. Based on the results of an interview conducted with the Assistant Director of Sales & Marketing of Bintang Bali Resort, during the closure of hotel operations carried out since April 2020, the hotel renovated two buildings they owned, namely the south wing and north wing. This renovation aims to prepare for the reopening of hotel operations in July 2021, but the opening of the hotel cannot be carried out according to the original plan due to the development of COVID-19 cases that are increasing in Indonesia. Bintang Bali Resort in preparing for the opening of the hotel is not enough to prepare the building alone, but must prepare a new marketing mix strategy in this new normal.

According to Kotler and Amstrong (2012:80) "the marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that companies use to continuously achieve their company's goals in the target market". Service marketing requires a more expanded marketing mix with the addition of elements of people, processes and physical evidence so that it becomes seven elements (7P). In the service industry there are 7 elements of the marketing mix, according to Kotler and Keller (2014: 78) there are 4

elements, namely product, price, promotion, place, and Tjiptono (2014:42) there are 3 more elements consisting of people, physical evidence, and process. Mice marketing mix strategies really need to be prepared in meeting package sales in the new normal. Considering that meeting packages are the biggest contributor to revenue at Bintang Bali Resort after room sales. According to (Arlene 2020) "the new normal consists of five strategies in its application, namely resolve, resilience, return, re-imagination and reform". The community must be able to adapt in carrying out changes in new behavior patterns and must be implemented globally by implementing health protocols in an effort to prevent the COVID-19 virus. This is in line with the Program of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy in issuing a Guidebook for the Implementation of Cleanliness, Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability in the Implementation of Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) (2020). Based on the above background, the author is interested in taking the title "MICE Marketing Mix Strategy in Preparation for Meeting Package Sales at Bintang Bali Resort in the New Normal".

Methodology

This research was conducted at Bintang Bali Resort located on Jalan Kartika Plaza, Kuta District, Badung Regency. The object of this study is the MICE marketing mix strategy in preparation for the sale of meeting packages at Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal. The types of data used are qualitative and quantitative data. The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary data. The data collection techniques are through observation, documentation studies and interviews. Sugiyono (2015: 275) mentions that there are three types of triangulation data, i.e. source triangulation, method triangulation and time triangulation. Triangulation of sources used through interviews with three sources. The key informant determination technique used is purposive sampling, with three key informants including Assistant Director of Sales & Marketing Bintang Bali Resort, Account Director of The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Assistant Director of Event Services Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions by testing the validity of the results using source triangulation.

Results and Discussions

Results

1. Current Situation Situation MICE Marketing Mix Strategy on the New Normal at Bintang Bali Resort

Based on the results of an interview with the Assistant Director of Sales and Marketing of Bintang Bali Resort regarding the current situation of the MICE marketing mix in the new normal at Bintang Bali Resort, it can be explained as follows:

- a. The strategy carried out by the hotel in supporting MICE activities in the new normal era is to carry out building renovations (rebuilding) and updating room facilities equipped with COVID-19 protocols. All rooms have been equipped with COVID-19 protocol facilities such as a room service menu that has been equipped with a barcode, the availability of a Badung Regency COVID-19 telephone call center number and a room disinfectant sign installed in front of the room when the room attendant will clean and sterilize the room. The renovation of this building was carried out from February 2020 and was completed in April 2021. The opening of the hotel was planned to be carried out in July 2021 but has not been realized due to the implementation of the extended PPKM.
- b. The 1.5 m distance adjustment and 50% meeting capacity adjustment have been carried out by Bintang Bali Resort. The application of this distancing refers to the Handbook for the Implementation of Cleanliness, Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability in the Implementation of Meeting Activities, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.
- c. The use of hybrid meetings and virtual has not been implemented at Bintang Bali Resort because it requires a fairly high cost budget, but Bintang Bali Resort will consider the use of this digital innovation in the future.

- d. The strategy they carry out in preparation for meeting package sales in the new normal era is to adjust the price of the meeting package according to the customer's budget. This price adjustment is considered not optimal due to the fierce competition in the Kuta area, and Bintang Bali Resort which is still closing hotel operations.
2. Empirical Comparative Analysis with the comparator hotel/venue
Empirical comparative analysis of MICE marketing mix strategies in the new normal era at Bintang Bali Resort is compared through interviews with The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center as hotels/ venues that have carried out MICE activities in the new normal era, as follows:
 - a. Product
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center implement hybrid products and virtual meetings, providing facilities and infrastructure related to COVID-19 protocols. Bintang Bali Resort has implemented facilities and infrastructure related to COVID-19 protocols and has not implemented hybrid innovations and virtual meetings.
 - b. Place
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali pays attention to the distance setting of 1.5 m with a capacity the room used is 25%, Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center adjusts a distance of 1 m with a room capacity of 50% and Bintang Bali Resort pays attention to the distance setting of 1.5 m with a room capacity of 25%.
 - c. Price
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali, Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center and Bintang Bali Resort have similarities in determining prices with a flexibility system and in accordance with the customer's budget.
 - d. Promotion
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center utilize a digital promotion system, Bintang Bali Resort has not utilized the digital promotion system to the fullest.
 - e. People
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali conducts online training and vaccinates their employees, Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center conducts training and vaccinates their employees and Bintang Bali Resort conducts offline training and vaccinates its employees.
 - f. Physical Evidence
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali and Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center have waste and waste treatment systems handled by ITDC, while Bintang Bali Resort collaborates with third parties in handling waste treatment and wastewater treatment that is managed by itself.
 - g. Process
The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali, Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center and Bintang Bali Resort have made SOPs in handling COVID-19 and monitored the SOPs made.
3. Theoretical Comparative Analysis with CHSE handbook of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy
Theoretical comparative analysis aims to analyze how the application of mice marketing mix strategy in planning the sale of meeting packages in the new normal with the theoretical conformity of the handbook for the implementation of cleanliness, health, safety and environmental sustainability in the implementation of meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia based on the MICE 7 P marketing mix indicators (product, place, price, promotion, people, physical evidence and process), which can be presented as follows:
 - a. Product
Bintang Bali Resort has implemented facilities and infrastructure regarding the COVID-19 protocol according to the guidebook, but has not yet prepared digital innovations in hybrids and virtual meetings, the use of products made from plastic is still found and does not yet have a CHSE certificate from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.

- b. Place
Bintang Bali Resort has implemented a 1.5 m distance adjustment system with a capacity of 50% and according to the guidebook.
- c. Price
Bintang Bali Resort has implemented a pricing strategy system based on budget customer and pays attention to flexibility.
- d. Promotion
Bintang Bali Resort has not utilized digital promotions to the fullest. Promotions are carried out only by making videos of the implementation of CHSE in hotels.
- e. People
Bintang Bali Resort has held offline training with employees, risk analysis and mitigation of exposure to COVID-19, conducted regular checks on employees and has carried out COVID-19 vaccinations, this is in accordance with the guidebook.
- f. Physical Evidence
Bintang Bali Resort conducts waste treatment with third parties and treats waste water that is reused to water plants. This has been in accordance with the guidebook.
- g. Process
Bintang Bali Resort has made SOPs in handling COVID-19 and has monitored these SOPs.

Discussions

Based on the analysis of the current situation, empirical and theoretical analysis of the MICE marketing mix strategy in preparation for meeting package sales at Bintang Bali Resort can be formulated a 7 P marketing mix strategy consisting of Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence and Process.

- a. Product
Product adjustments in the new normal era have been noticed by Bintang Bali Resort, namely with a capacity used of only 50%, seating distance arrangements set at 1.5 m to implement social distancing, microphone settings and covers that are always disinfected and replaced when reused by speakers, provision of isolation rooms, provision of hygiene and health equipment such as masks, gloves, and digital thermometers have been set aside as well as social distancing position markers, medicine boxes and closed bins. Disinfecting the room will be carried out once every four hours, sterilization of food and beverage equipment is carried out using a steam machine. A flexibility system in the new normal era such as plans to use lunch boxes and coffee break set ups is also planned. Bintang Bali Resort has received a certificate from the Bali Provincial Tourism Office in September 2020 regarding the certificate of the new era life order in the field of tourism, but has not received a CHSE certificate from the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy and the Ministry of Health. Bintang Bali Resort has not taken advantage of the use of digital innovation in the implementation of MICE in the new normal era. Bintang Bali Resort can use product strategies in providing hybrid and virtual meetings with platform zoom and Google meet in the new normal era according to the results of interviews from comparative hotels/venues. Bintang Bali Resort can use a thermometer scanner to check body temperature to make it more flexible so that guests can check their own body temperature. The provision of products with the reduction of plastic waste can be done by replacing them using single-use materials, no plastic and less paper in order to maintain environmental sustainability.
- b. Place
Bintang Bali Resort has prepared a place or location for mice activities to be held cleanly and safely in the new normal era. The strategy carried out by the hotel in the field of location is to ensure the circulation of fresh air and sufficient sunlight in the area venues, distancing of 1 m and capacity reductions in venues, toilets, places of worship and waiting rooms, provision of hands, hand sanitizers and installation of information regarding COVID-19 protocols in strategic locations passed by guests and employees. Based on the results of an interview with the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center, Bintang Bali Resort can use a venue strategy by utilizing digital innovations such as the use of information media in the

form of running text that can be provided at the crucial location passed by guests and employees.

c. Price

Bintang Bali Resort makes price adjustments by paying attention to flexibility and according to the customer's budget when holding meetings. Bintang Bali Resort has currently created a new meeting package called residential package which is intended for guests who want to book a meeting package including with a room. The price reduction was carried out by Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal era with a cashless payment system and barcodes. Based on the results of interviews with comparative hotels/venues, Bintang Bali Resort can carry out a pricing strategy with a customized system, because it cannot use fixed prices in the current situation.

d. Promotion

Bintang Bali Resort conducts a promotional mix in terms of sales promotion and public relations and establishes a good relationship with loyal customers via Whatsapp. Another promotion that was carried out was by making a video of the implementation of the new normal at Bintang Bali Resort and uploaded to their social media. The use of promotion in digital form has not been implemented by Bintang Bali Resort. Based on the results of interviews with the hotel / comparative venue, promotional strategies that can be used in maximizing the preparation of meeting package sales in the new normal era by creating interesting content in the form of preparations that have been made and uploading them to social media owned by Bintang Bali Resort such as Instagram and Facebook, so that potential buyers know how mice readiness in the new normal era at Bintang Bali Resort.

e. People

Bintang Bali Resort in preparing employees who are competent and ready to serve customers in the new normal era has conducted training on the prevention and handling of COVID-19 and made standard operating procedures in the new normal era. The right division of tasks in the new normal era must be carried out, therefore the hotel also formed a COVID-19 TASK FORCE. The hotel also always checks all the health of their employees and vaccinates in preparing to welcome guests in the new normal era. Bintang Bali Resort also requires all participants or delegates who will later hold a meeting at their hotel to fill out the COVID-19 risk self-assessment formula or e-HAC. The preparation of Bintang Bali Resort in terms of human resources in preparing for the new normal era has been carried out carefully. Based on the results of an interview with The Westin Resort Nusa Dua Bali as a comparison hotel, the people dimension strategy that can be used by Bintang Bali Resort is to take advantage of innovation by making online training using the zoom platform or google meet and holding exams afterwards to measure how employees understand the training provided. The management also needs to establish a good relationship with employees even though hotel operations are still closed by conducting online gatherings through the Zoom meeting platform.

f. Physical evidence

Physical evidence is an important part of MICE activities in the new normal era. Guests will feel safe when they see exactly how the conditions of the venue they are using are. The physical evidence applied by Bintang Bali Resort is that it has a typical Balinese interior and exterior design, waste processing is very much considered by cooperating through third parties. Wastewater treatment is carried out by Bintang Bali Resort which is reused to water gardens or plants. Based on the results of theoretical analysis from the Guidebook for the Implementation of Cleanliness, Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability in the Implementation of Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) published by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Bintang Bali Resort can provide a physical evidence strategy by providing organic/ inorganic and special waste bins to make it easier for customers to sort waste in the future.

g. Process

Services used in the new normal era must pay attention to no touch, high sanitation and flexibility. This has been implemented by Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal era, this process is in the form of a series of tasks and responsibilities carried out by each person/

their respective fields. This process is regulated in the SOP made by the hotel and has been mutually agreed upon. Monitoring of the SOPs made has been carried out, risk analysis and technical engineering in crowd prevention to reduce the spread of COVID-19 have also been carried out. The sterilization process is very strictly enforced by disinfecting the room and things once every four hours. Traffic arrangements in social distancing have also been observed. Based on the results of empirical analysis with comparative hotels/venues, Bintang Bali Resort can make a process strategy by disinfecting the room every two hours to keep the room clean and sterile.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are MICE marketing mix strategy in the sale of meeting packages planned by Bintang Bali Resort in the new normal with indicators 7 P (product, place, price, promotion, people, physical evidence and process) based on the results of empirical analysis through hotels / comparison venues and the results of theoretical analysis through the Guidebook for the Implementation of Cleanliness, Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability in the Implementation of Meeting Activities, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) by Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy are largely well planned. Product strategies with the use of technological innovations such as hybrids and virtual meetings, the provision of waste bins that are divided into organic/ inorganic and special as well as reuse and recycle utilization systems have not been implemented by Bintang Bali Resort.

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