



Ethical Hospitality Marketing, Brand- Boosting and Business Sustainability

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Abstract

Hotel directors and especially the marketers, face ethical challenges on a daily basis. Nonetheless very few tend to consider some aspects of their daily operations to be issues relating to ethics at all. In the past it has been commonplace for many hotels to conduct their operations in whichever way, often to the detriment of consumers and this trend continues to an extent today. Greater market penetration is vital for a hotel as the depth of sales of a product or service in a particular market enhances the bottom-line and invariably affects sustainability. Certain hotels consider ethics to be a restraint on their profitability. Such operations consider increased revenues and ethics to be contrarywise. In reality however, espousing ethical practices may in the short term decrease profits, but in the long-run a hotel's profitability will increase due to the notion that once a hotel has a positive ethical practice reputation it gains a strategic competitive advantage. Many hotels are not looking at the consequences of their unethical actions in aspects such as advertising. There should however be an approach to advertising in which hotels strive to reach consumers in an honest way without subjectively embellishing and making blatant untruths about their offerings. Marketing is intrinsically linked to a variety of ethical issues that require serious consideration and a sense of moral idealism in which universal consumer rights are not flouted, and utilitarianism in which consequences of actions are carefully mapped out so that 'the greatest good for the greatest number' can be realised after assessment of the costs and benefits of the desired ethical marketing. Hotel operations cannot forever hide behind the concept *caveat emptor* or 'buyer beware' and are called upon to be proactively ethical as matter of course in all dealings but especially in marketing.

Keywords: Hospitality industry, hotels, ethics, service, quality

Introduction

The terms morals and ethics are frequently used interchangeably. Ethics denotes rules of conduct that are grounded on moral obligations and duties in how people should conduct themselves in social contexts. Ethics distinguishes right conduct from wrong conduct and guides one to do the right thing when ethical dilemmas arise. Morals denotes what is right and considered to be virtuous conduct and character in individuals and societies. The values which express ethical principles include uprightness, honesty, integrity, justice, keeping promises, loyalty, benevolence, accountability, the quest of excellence, leadership, responsibility, non-maleficence and respect for others. Such values critical for the success and ultimate sustainability of a hotel (Stevens, 2008).

According to Mouna Knani (2014), practitioners in the hospitality industry accept that ethics is undoubtedly one of the most important issues faced today. Current marketing practices are promoting disinformation as well as a consumerist and highly materialistic lifestyle culture which is hugely detrimental to society. Managers face challenges to increase profits due to intensive competition and confront a plethora of ethical dilemmas in their day-to-day



operations when it comes to issues such as marketing their property's services and products truthfully. Many seek to create the impression that their property far surpasses the competition and that if one stays at their property, they are in a superior social stratum and way above their peers. While it is true that in the hotel industry, what is of paramount importance is the customer's happiness, it is not justifiable to market a property falsely. The Prima Facie Duty Framework (Ross & Stratton-Lake, 2009: 4) helps us to comprehend desired marketing ethics. According to this framework, marketing activities should be conducted with a sense of fidelity, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement and especially non-maleficence. Marketers have tried to comply by crafting novel strategies, such as *inter alia*, consumer-oriented marketing, innovative marketing, a sense-of-mission marketing and social benefits marketing.

A hotel exuding an ethical climate reduces turnover, and augments service quality and guests' experiences. Ethical practices in any shape or form are likely to increase a hotels' employees' productivity and result in higher profits. Various studies demonstrate a direct relationship between ethical climate and occupational satisfaction (Cheng, Yang, Wan, & Chu, 2013). Ethics in the hospitality industry is a matter of concern for all hotels that want to prosper. Clearly, ethics in the hospitality industry differs from other industries since it is characteristically forged on intangibility and the inseparability of the industry. Many hotels fail to enhance their brand's social image through the voluntary application of non-profit social behaviours. Ferrell and Hartline (2011: 64) suggest that there are many hotels which seek to bring into line their philanthropic activities with their marketing and brand image. By being involved in benevolent activities a hotel displays its marketing ethics and improve its brand image. Given that hotels are in the service industry, they are exposed to a wide range of stakeholders and become expected philanthropic activity supporters.

By means of contrast, where there are price issues in marketing ethics including what is termed price fraud and price discrimination, these are considered to be serious breaches of the law and what is expected morally. Hospitality is after all defined as the welcoming reception and treatment of guests and this precludes falsification of what is on offer. It is unfortunate that many hotels and often even those in major chains, fail to abide by an apposite ethical code and fall into the trap of falsely marketing their products and services. Where the business philosophy is one which is genuinely exuding a sense of social contribution, hotels are likely to be philanthropic and thus augment the attraction of their brand (Huang, 2005: 13). Researches into hospitality industry ethics has been very scarce (Yaman & Gurel, 2006), although many ethical behaviour investigations have been undertaken and reported on in the literature, relating to industry and corporate business. An encouraging trend has been the growth in Hospitality ethics education in the last two decades (Lee & Tsang, 2013), which can only benefit the industry.

Marketing ethics and a brand's image

Marketing ethics relates to the totality of the uniform behaviours to deal with the relationship between a hotel and its multiplicity of stakeholders. Standardized ethical behaviours need to be applied which take care of the moral principles behind the operations of a hotel and its regulation of marketing. The marketing ethics applied determine if the marketing events bring benefits to consumers. According to Schlegelmilch (1998:8), marketing ethics deals with ethical dilemmas concerning to the function of marketing. Marketing ethics is often



flawed from an ethical perspective, for example, a superior graded resort hotel on a tropical island advertises rooms on a billboard at reduced special rates in bold print and places an asterisk above the price. The asterisk denotes small print at the bottom of the advertisement representing the conditions under which the offer is considered to be valid. This includes booking one week in advance with a minimum six day stay including a weekend. It is also subject to availability, and valid only for travellers on stated airlines. How ethical is such advertising given that the likelihood of accessing relevant flights on such short notice is remote? Laczniak and Murphy (1993) have defined marketing ethics as “the systematic study of how moral standards are applied to marketing decisions, behaviours and institutions” which implies that marketing must be methodically dealt with from an ethical perspective at all times.

Hotel marketers would do well to remember that consumers are not only guests, but also active word of mouth the marketers of the hotel’s brand. A good brand reputation and is advantageous in drives to establish a respectable corporate image and brand image in the minds of existing and potential consumers.

The critical issue is whether or not hotel marketers should take advantage of the notion that obtaining material possessions of high quality will serve the purpose of improving the lives of consumers and afford them greater status in society. It is clear in the literature that a positive ethical climate cultivates a healthy organization by growing employee job satisfaction, enhancing customer experiences, and increasing the hotels bottom-line. Given the dynamic and continually changing competitive environments in which they operate, hotels must discover ways to stay ahead and maintain a strategic competitive advantage over their growing number of competitors. Not only should they strive to offer consumers lower prices and a better range of services, but they should also market ethically and operate ethically. This is particularly important given that ethics is essential in business activities. It has been ascertained in past research that the employees’ acuity of their organization’s ethical climate is directly related to their job satisfaction levels and to their organizational commitment. Their organizational performance is also affected by their perception of ethical activity or the lack thereof (Pettijohn, Pettijohn, & Taylor, 2008).

Many hotel marketers are essentially hoodwinking consumers into buy services and products they do not really need or even want and this often places the consumers in situations where they are hugely in debt to their detriment and that of their families. Many consumers believe that competing services and products are reasonably similar in terms of quality but this is often found to be untrue once a property is checked into. It is gradually sinking in that hotels which vie with their competition on the basis of only price, leads to an unpredictable market and very uneven profits. This is why many hotels are forging collaborative relationships with their competition and seeking to create better long-term partnerships with consumers. Hotel marketers use tools such as advertising to promote consumption in order to generate greater profits. While this may be good for the company and its bottom line, it is not always in the best interests of the consumer. It has been shown that hotels that do what is ethical and moral to their consumers and employees generate long-term benefits (Wallace, 2008).

Creating a healthy hotel organization environment requires the fostering of ethical awareness, ethical practices such as marketing, and ethical conduct which enhances



employee satisfaction and reduces employee turnover intentions. It should enhance guest experience and grow profits (Cheng et al., 2013). There has however, in fairness, been somewhat of a drive by many companies to market products and services with greater integrity and in an ethical manner. According to Murphy et al, (2005) marketing ethically is generally “the systematic study of how moral standards are applied to marketing decisions, behaviours and institutions”.

In the hotel business, ethical issues as they relate to product and service image are reflected in three facets including quality, price and innovative features. A hotels primary offering is its service and the standard thereof is the primary indicator of ethics. When standards are poor and service is appalling and devoid of any quality at all, the business is unethical, since quality is part and parcel of service provision.

The transactions between guests and hotels are voluntary, and each respective party should obtains benefits, in a win-win scenario. Where benefits are absent for guests, the hotel is essentially operating unethically and brand image suffers (Zou, 2004: 18). Kotler (2004), states that all marketing decisions should be made after careful consideration of all stakeholders including consumers, the company and society on the whole. He calls for societal marketing in which there are social and ethical considerations in marketing practice (Kotler, 1997) since these will ultimately bring a company success. Consumers make ethical judgements which impact on a company’s sales. Embley (1993) also emphasises ‘cause related marketing’ as a critical issue which needs greater consideration by companies. Beck et al. (2007) carefully studied whether hotel sales and marketing executives are unswerving in dealing with ethical marketing issues and found that great inconsistencies exist.

Brand Marketing

Wang (2004) has defined brand marketing as “...the basis of the brand positioning, enterprise make the communication of brand with customers, to create marketing activities with the core of brand.” Brand image includes the tangible and the intangible aspects a guest encounters. Especially important from a marketing perspective are the tangible parts of brand image including service and product image, the hotel’s environmental image, the social image relating to CSR, the employee image and service performance image (Brand Image, 2009).

Brand marketing comprises four distinct but related strategies, including brand personality, brand communication (BC), brand sales (BS), brand management (BM). For each of these strategies a hotel needs to consider many aspects which are briefly described below. Brand personality (BP) consist of the brand name, its packaging design, product pricing, brand concept, brand ambassador, brand image style, and the brand suitability group. Brand communication (BC) includes the advertising style and ethics, the media strategy, advertising campaigns, public relations activities, word-of-mouth image, and the final product presentation. Brand sales (BS) must be ethically concluded whether they be personal selling, staff promotions, advertising promotions, events marketing, or special offers. Brand management (BM) comprises inter alia, the marketing team and how they building a brand and maintain it while encouraging guests to use a hotel (Brand Marketing, 2009). The



development of a carefully crafted positioning strategy is the most important function in brand management (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006: 172.)

Hotel brand marketing needs to carefully consider service and product quality, ethical practices, positioning in the marketplace, property eco-friendly characteristics and ethical marketing communication. Service quality is clearly the key to competitiveness of a hotel. Hotel marketers need to precisely position a hotel brand to find the desired target group. The characteristics of brand include the service offered, hotel facilities, conference and other rooms, and even the hotel's layout, leisure features and food and beverage operations. It is such features which increase customers' satisfaction and meet their needs and wants, thus enhancing consumer devotion to the hotel brand. Therefore it is important that these be honestly marketed. Huimin and Ryan (2011) assert that there are many hotel managers who do indeed consider that their business has broader concerns than simply making greater profits.

Despite such calls, ethical issues are hardly considered by some hotels since profit maximisation is the prime objective of a business. In such a context, marketing is often a very contentious issue and considered by many consumers to be a reflection of the somewhat unprincipled side of business conduct. This is mainly due to the vigorous endorsement of consumerism and the promotion of what are really artificial needs. Consequently, many consumers fall victim to these artificial needs and feel totally inadequate if they do not access certain products, for example. Many consumers that do fulfil the market driven artificial needs, are simply wasting resources that could rather be spent on more useful and necessary items and services. Marketing thus plays a huge role in influencing people and in especially emerging nations, this often results in stunted development.

By and large, the many goods and services that are created to fulfil artificial needs and desires do very little to promote the development of society per se (Galbraith, 1999). It is apparent that consumers now more than ever tend to define their social status by the items and services they use, whether these are designer clothes, branded sportswear or motor vehicles which they flaunt for all to see. This trend is encouraged and promoted by advertising and branding which are now also pushing adults to spend much time on consuming goods so as to define who they are. Many people have fallen victim to marketing and thus become far more egocentric and desirous of pursuing a narcissistic ethic of self-preservation and fail to consider others around them to the ultimate detriment of society (Barber, 2008). While behaviour is a function of an individual in a particular environment, the choices people tend to make often reflect their personas and the environment in which they reside and the situational variables beyond their control. Given the latter, once individuals are surrounded by others having certain products which they do not possess, or staying at hotels which they cannot afford to stay in, they feel an urge to obtain these services or products so as not to feel isolated or inadequate. The possession of that 'thing', becomes essential but is not really necessary.

Desirable Marketing

Only ethical brands can hope to survive in the global hospitality market. Such brands consider the needs and wants of consumers, and market honestly to consumers.



Consequently hotels need to promote a relationship paradigm in their marketing initiatives which incorporates ethics and is based on a solid teleological evaluation process considering all stakeholders. Hotels need to develop codes of ethics which are strictly enforceable since these will promote ethical marketing practices (Ferrell and Fraedrich, 1997) and hospitality marketers attitudes need to be changed to incorporate ethics as a critical determinant of a company's success (Singhapakdi et al., 1995). Laczniak and Murphy (1985) advocate that organizational and strategic mechanisms be in place in companies which will serve the purpose of improving marketing ethics. These mechanisms include codes of marketing practice ethics, creation of marketing ethics committees in workplaces, as well as the implementation of ethics education modules for especially marketing managers. Many marketers deem it vital that that their marketing initiatives should be conducted according to right and wrong values so that consumers are not compromised (Weaver and Ferrell 1977; Zinkhan 1994).

What are the main problems and issues in marketing?

Marketing has a great influence on people today and to a large extent guide consumer behaviour. Many signals and messages are given to consumers that prompt them to buy certain items and substitute what they have with other items. When consumers view certain advertisements they erroneously believe that by owning what is portrayed, they will become happier, sexier, liked more be viewed as successful. Marketing thus has the ethical responsibility of educating consumers about what products and services actually offer (Gün, 1999) but instead there are implied deceptions in that many messages are sent out to consumers which do not explicitly state what impact products or services may have. There is also omissive deception in that many adverts do not inform consumers about the risks that are associated with a product, such as alcoholic beverages. Geoffrey Warnock (1971) indicated four standards which are considered suitable for advertising and marketing in general, namely: beneficence, non-maleficence – no damaging, no dishonesty, and no prejudice (Zinkhan, 1994). Hotels employing good ethical practices can meaningfully grow productivity by diminishing the cost of business transactions and by promoting customer loyalty through trust. It is important for hotels to draft effective codes of conduct which consider diverse demographics, religions, standards, customs, demeanours and cultures (Peceri, 2010).

It is sadly the case that many hotel guests are cynical and troubled by the poor service they receive when paying what is a fair sum of money. They are distrustful of false marketing drives which promise them the 'world' and offer them far less in very poor benefits. Guests are more environmentally conscious and hope to see that their chosen property is applying conservation and sustainable development measures, and also embarking on social responsibility initiatives. Many hotels cover themselves by saying that their product and service offerings 'help' to do this or that. This simply means that these products 'assist' to do something and no more. And so the adverts placed are literally and legally acceptable. This is not the case ethically however. Guests expect that a hotel should contribute to the sustainable development of society in general.

Brand-boosting through ethical practices including marketing is vital to a brand's reputation and is derived from the hotel satisfying the consumers' needs and wants and in reality exceeding them. Satisfied consumers are worth their weight in gold as they freely publicize



the brand image in a positive manner. By service quality excellence based on ethical marketing, hotels can obtain far greater consumer gratification and thus a more positive brand image. Upchurch and Ruhland (1995) reported that the lodging industry is in any case characterized by what is supposed to be a considerate working environment that meets the needs of guests in an attentive, operative, and well-organized manner where munificence is evident.

Hotel companies are duty bound to design products and services that meet and exceed governmental expectations as well as specifications and should thus be safe for consumers. Goods should be manufactured without defects and product quality and especially safety should be considerations. Hotels should clearly not target children or the elderly or exclude potential consumers by means of selective marketing. Where hotels are international brands, they should also not target emerging markets in developing countries. Sadly many companies embark on greenwashing initiatives in their marketing in which they make themselves appear ethical while acting unethically. Consumers have rights and there are many laws that regulate private law relationships between companies and the consumers that purchase their goods or services. Where companies make false claims this is illegally unethical. Many companies also use fear to market their products. For example some hotels situated in relatively poor suburbs where crime is rife, advertise using images of peace and tranquillity and this is unacceptable.

A wide range of ethical problems arise in marketing given that the parties in marketing transactions frequently have unique expectations concerning the manner in which a business association will subsist and the way in which transactions ought be carried out. It is often the case that ethics are breached in hotel marketing so that consumers are not obtaining what they believe they are paying for and often obtain what they do not need. Customer service is thus not always providing value adding benefits to the consumer. Marketing strives to appeal to customers' consciences and desires and is the tool which builds brand loyalty and thus promotes the bottom-line.

Other marketing and brand concern areas

A major problem is that many hotels do not having a clear code of ethics or a clear code of conduct, to guide employees. Employees thus consider situations on more of a day-to-day basis and they do not always consider the ethical fundamentals. An employee's ethics are strongly influenced by their workplace supervisors and managers, as well as their families. Ethics tends to be driven from the top down so that if a senior employee in a leadership role, such as a hotel marketing manager, is not an ethical role model, this may adversely affect the entire employee complement. The ecological environment needs to be considered where a brand builds hotels designed to use energy-saving systems, including energy and water-saving measures, reduces solid waste and garbage and reduces carbon and other emissions.

Certain hotels employ highly selective marketing strategies to dampen demand from what are perceived to be objectionable market sectors. Such unethical market exclusion practices are for example, the former stances of certain industries on ethnic minorities and the gay market. It is especially in emerging markets where consumers are vulnerable to



unscrupulous marketing strategies. There is clearly deception or dishonesty when an advertisement is intentionally misleading, or when consumers could be harmed or even injured because they would have selected a different product, service or brand if they had not been negatively influenced by dishonest marketing (Balkas & Akbulut, 2006).

Many hotels thus blatantly lie, misrepresent or conceal the facts when it comes to providing consumers with information on their products or services. For example, important characteristics of products which are harmful are not always communicated to potential consumers. This essentially means that consumers are not always making informed decisions when it comes to purchasing certain products. In particularly the emerging markets in the developing nations, consumers are vulnerable to psychologically appealing advertising in which the real facts are often concealed. Blatant untruths are often used in ambiguous wording and companies consciously coax consumers into making false inferences about products so as to deceive them and lure them into purchasing products and services.

Deceptive marketing is often unnoticed by consumers and even humour is used to dupe them as it provides a fleeting escape from the stresses of daily living. Various advertisers thus deliberately seek to take advantage of this by deceptive advertising of a product or service that can possibly lessen the consumers' constraints through what is perceived to be humorous. Facts are thus often concealed so as to exploit consumers and mislead them. Untruthful statements are accordingly often made and images of products are far removed from reality. For example, many hotel restaurants mislead consumers by placing photos of products with certain ingredients on billboards or menus and in reality, they are not on offer. For example, some restaurants state that the size of their T-bone steak is 500g, but once received by the consumer, it is clearly nothing over 300g in size. Such ethical issues relate especially to vulnerable consumers in emerging markets in developing countries, where consumers are often not aware of expert marketing manoeuvres. When consumers actually purchase the product that is advertised it is often devoid of some of the ingredients and about half the size. Where there is negative publicity due to poor service quality and false marketing (Meadin, 2011), or for example, reports of unsanitary bed linen, or false advertising, hotel turnover will plummet rapidly. Brand reputation must be protected at all costs as the consumers satisfaction with a brand is vital for its ultimate survival (Ding, 2007: 207-210).

Many hotel advertisements create the impression that they 'help' society. The word 'helps' is used at will to advertise products as are 'virtually' and 'as much as' or 'up to'. These are examples of 'weasel' words which mask, evade or help a company to retreat from making direct honest statements about their products and services. The result is that many adverts are ambiguous and thus mislead consumers and ultimately cost them money as well as often damaging their interests. For example, take a number of hotel slogans that state they are 'the best' in what they do. Has it been substantiated by research that they are the best, or is this simply a ploy to obtain greater market share? Ethically speaking such advertising is unacceptable. It is commonplace that certain companies engage in *puffery* (a legal term). This is when product qualities are blatantly exaggerated, virtually fraudulently- but in a legal manner, so as to aid a business to obtain a strategic competitive advantage. The difference between mere puffery and fraud is difficult to ascertain: "The problem... is the slippery slope by which variations on puffery can descend fairly quickly to lies" (Gilman, 2003). Making consumers 'need' a product the he or she might not have considered previously so as to



make profits is generally considered as unethical behaviour. Various types of humour are used to deliberately deceive consumers into buying a service or product. This is also unethical behaviour. There is no doubt that ethical decision making in marketing is appropriately more apparent. An ethical frame of reference and starting point is critical for all conduct at work and marketing should be no different. How ethical is it to promote the use of condoms as means of preventing AIDS while simultaneously encouraging promiscuous behaviour?

Research conducted by Hyman et al. which included members of the American Academy of Advertising, strongly indicated that the major issues concerning people when it comes to marketing were: dishonesty in advertisements, advertising to vulnerable children, the advertising of tobacco and alcoholic beverages, unhelpful political advertising, ethnic and sexual stereotyping of people (Zinkhan, 2006). Six decades ago, tobacco was marketed as an healthy or a macho-type item but today the truth is told, and images of cancerous lungs are displayed on cigarette packs in certain countries to dissuade would be users.

Hotel marketing decision-makers must carefully consider what they promote and cognizance should be taken of the fact that consumers, are by and large "limited information processors". Consequently, they often make choices by discriminating between diverse information they obtain (Hogarth, 1987). When hotels market honestly and their employees are considered to be caring, concerned, fair, trustworthy and professional (Wong & Chan, 2010) they set the tone for a successful brand. Yeh (2012) found that hospitality properties should place greater stress on business ethics, and that ethics education and training on will help employees at all levels as well as future employees to deal better with ethical challenges.

Conclusion

Materialism is engulfing the world and consumers incorrectly believe that greater consumption will improve their standard of living and quality of life. Consumer autonomy should not be violated by misleading advertising. The promotion of consumerism and materialism to vulnerable people is unethical and hotels should rather focus on the benefits of their products and services for society, since they have a social and legal obligation to engage honestly with potential consumers. In the new way of operating marketing should be a process of doing things in interacting by the consumer (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Consumers should be viewed as co-creators and should be involved more than what they are in purchasing items with real value that they really need. Once hotels of all sizes are seen to be more ethical they will increase their sales and maximise their share of the market. The welfare of consumers are paramount and seeking short terms profits is short sighted, consequently marketing ethics violations should be avoided at all costs.

Hotel managers and their marketers have a duty to uphold the highest levels of services, guest satisfaction and best returns on investment based on ethical conduct. In order to meet these purposes hotels must deliver services that meet and exceed customers needs and wants. Ethical practice should thus intersect all areas of operation, whether it be in marketing, human resources, housekeeping, front office, food and beverage services, marketing, purchasing, public relations and guest and employee security. Ethically driven



leaders and managers need to safeguard that the vision, mission, values as well as the ethics of the hotel are reflected in a socially responsible culture .

Sales and marketing must be honest at all times and professional when dealing with customers, competitors, regulatory bodies and employees. Marketers must behave honestly, and depict products correctly and always adhere to the company policies and code of ethics, laws and regulations. Ethically managed hotels show deference to the rights of all stakeholders while not diminishing business value.

By promoting offers ethically, reliably and precisely, and by selling products and services based on their own advantages, marketers show ethical astuteness. Showing all costs related to a guests stay is critical, and no hidden charges are to manifest. In addition, prices must reflect both the costs sustained in delivering the product or service, and the worth the guest supposes he or she will receive. Through often negative advertising techniques, hospitality marketers highlight the disadvantages of their competitors' products or services rather than promoting the real advantages of their own. Consumers are becoming obsessive in their drives to stay at the highest graded hotels or obtain the latest cellular phones, often with many added features and fall victim to fads and what is considered trendy as they believe this will give them status amongst their peers and enhance their self-image. In economically depressed periods, consumers can ill afford to buy the products and services that they do and often do so to the detriment of their families. Consequently a very destructive consumerism has engulfed people in especially the developing nations who are intent to demonstrate to the wealthy nations that they have 'arrived'. Consumerism is often very harmful as it promotes excessive consumption and this stresses the natural environment as it leads to a depletions of resources. While it is commonplace for people to seek material possessions this has a negative effect when it becomes an obsession to have the latest version of any item.

Prior to making important hotel reservations and other purchases, consumers should conduct research in order to obtain a better understanding of what it is they are often investing huge sums of money in and should ask themselves if they really need to stay in the hotel in which they are about to make a reservation. Many hospitality businesses fear irreparable damage to their images and bottom-lines, when there are revelations in the press about their unethical practices. The huge costs and time spent related to legal actions must be avoided at all costs thus no hotel should need to face a lawsuit based on unethical practices such as false marketing. This is why it is essential that they at the outset propagate ethics and morally appropriate marketing. This makes good business sense since consumers, especially the millennial generation, prefer to deal with socially responsible companies.

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