

Mixed-Strategies of Marketing in BBTF: Seller Persuasion Towards Prospective Buyers

by Gede Ginaya Et Al.

Submission date: 17-Sep-2019 10:10PM (UTC-0500)

Submission ID: 1174875924

File name: 2._BBTF.pdf (965.93K)

Word count: 4789

Character count: 25670



Mixed-Strategies of Marketing in BBTF: Seller Persuasion Towards Prospective Buyers

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ABSTRACT

Objective – This paper examines the performance of the Bali & Beyond Travel Fair (BBTF) 2018, an event whereby buyers and sellers meet to negotiate on travel and tourism businesses at the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Centre (BNDCC). The study also explains the marketing strategies being used, through the perspective of the 7 Ps. Furthermore, the paper presents an authentic account of how marketing and tourism services (tour events) are actually initiated and performed.

Methodology/Technique – The data of the study is in the form of travel business correspondences, tour itineraries, the circular event of the travel fair, in-depth interviews with stakeholders, and the writer's observational notes. The analysis was conducted by applying a descriptive qualitative research, focusing on the 7 Ps of marketing strategy.

Findings – The study reveals that the travel fair plays an important role in attracting buyers to purchase products offered.

Novelty – The study shows that sellers must use events such as this as a marketing model and a powerful tool when reviewing strategic options and selecting the best future direction of their company.

Type of Paper: Empirical.

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39.

Keywords: Marketing Mix-strategies; BBTF; Sellers; Buyers; Sustainability.

1. Introduction

The BBTF is a business-to-business event organized by the Bali chapter of the ³Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA), for local travel industry players to sell travel packages to foreign buyers, including travel wholesalers, retailers, agents, and convention and incentive organizers. The Tourism Ministry, BBTF's main sponsor, have been working to turn the event into a marketplace attracting more vendors from overseas.

* Paper Info: Revised: January 11, 2019

Accepted: March 03, 2019

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The South Korea Tourism Organization was the sole foreign seller in BBTF 2017. The annual BBTF is set to return for its 5th edition at the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center from 27 June to 30 June 2018. The travel fair will not only promote Indonesian destinations, but will create a marketplace for other countries (Sarahtika, 2018).

At its core, the BBTF is considered as a marketing event. One of the eminent strategies used is the 7Ps marketing mix (Kotler & Gertner, 2004), in which a large group of marketing tactics are used to maximize sales (Kotler et. al., 2010). In the late 1970s, it was widely acknowledged that the Marketing Mix framework was outdated (Kotler & Gertner, 2004). This led to the creation of the 1981 Extended Marketing Mix developed by Booms and Bitner, who added 3 new elements to the 4 Ps Principle. This has allowed the Marketing Mix to include services not only physical products, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. 7 Ps Marketing Mix
Source: Kotler and Gertner (2004)

Palmer (2001) emphasizes the 3 Ps as all companies are reliant on the people who run them, be it sales staff or managing directors. Having the right people is essential to creating loyal customers as they are part of the products or services being sold; consumers are paying for quality experience.

BBTF largely involves services marketing (Zeithaml et al, 2010, p. 7), in which promises are made and kept to customers. Zeithaml et al (2010) states that the services marketing strategy focuses primarily on delivering experiences to customers rather than physical goods, integrating a focus on the customer throughout the firm and across all functions. All company departments, including marketing, human resources, and operations, necessitate working together as part of a collective in order to create an effective service marketing strategy. Services marketing strategy is centered on the customer, usage, and long term relationships formed, in contrast to traditional goods marketing which focuses heavily on short term transactions and exchanges (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Kotler (1994) and Gronroos (2007) explain a strategic framework in the field of service marketing, referred to as the services marketing triangle (Figure 1). As shown, the framework indicates the importance of keeping promises and building sustainable customer relationships. Zeithaml et al (2010) further elaborates that the triangle shows three interlinked groups that work together to develop, promote, and deliver services. For many, customers are participants in service production and co-creators of value, therefore, they play a key role in the service-delivery process; they can determine whether the service meets customer-defined specifications.

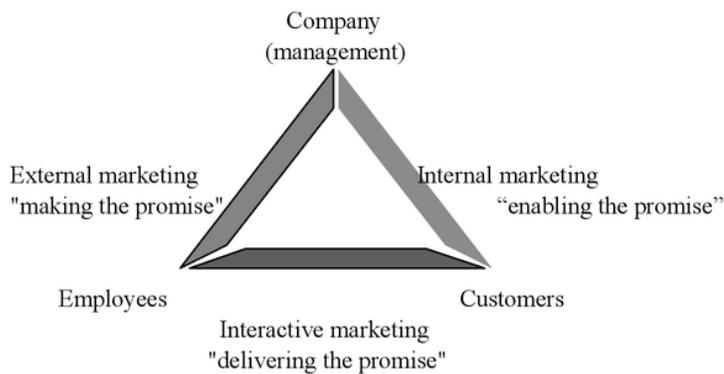


Figure 1. The Services Marketing Triangle

Source: Zeithaml et. al. (2010:7)

By and large, tourism as an economic sub-sector represents an industry that can contribute foreign exchange to Indonesia, which has previously relied heavily on the country's foreign exchange with the mining of coal, fuel, and gas. The tourism sector is a fast-growing and lucrative business, appealing to many due to its sustainability in comparison to other sectors. Wolf et al (2017) states that the tourism sector can be a transformative choice to develop sustainable conservation of protected areas due to their meaningful experiences, delivering long-lasting benefits that cultivate visitation rates and a conservation constituency. Indonesia's tourism sector is promising, and is expected to invite a large amount of foreign exchange, which in turns has a positive effect on local economies. In addition, this sector is labor intensive meaning it can provide various job opportunities for the country's growing population.

Bali is one of the regions in Indonesia that has demonstrated the scope of the effect of tourism. The region offers a complete tourist package, including cultural exploration, beach resorts, meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE). "Cultural tourism can be broadly defined as travel motivated by the desire to experience a destination's culture" (Smith and Robinson, 2006: 5). According to Vitasurya (2016), culture is the total sum of the ways of living built up by a group and passed on from one generation to another - culture is a form of identity. It is important to note is that individual people are placed in local and national social organizations, such as government, educational institutions, religious communities, work and recreation. Balinese culture and activities, coupled with strong business prospects, make the island an ideal location for those who want to 'combine business with pleasure', according to Dario Orsini, general manager of Sheraton Bali Kuta Resort (Chan, 2016).

Other than being known as one of the top beach resort destinations in the Asia-Pacific, Bali has become a popular MICE location, as evidenced by the increasing number of international and regional events held over the past few years. The region stands firm as one of the most preferred MICE destinations thanks to its complete facilities, accessibility, government support, and direct flights from most major cities in the region, according to Bipan Kapur, managing director of The Westin Resort Nusa Dua (Chan, 2016). Convention centers in Bali offer a combined capacity of up to 20,000 people, with up to 200,000 hotel rooms in various categories, state-of-the-art audio-visual facilities, and fiber-optic support and toll-free highways that drastically reduce the travel time from the airport to the main MICE center of Nusa Dua. The hotel also manages the Bali International Convention Centre (BICC), which seats up to 2,500 people. The development of the business' event or MICE in Bali is synergized by the launching of "Visit Indonesia", the national tourism program. The theme of Visit Indonesia in 2011 was Eco, Culture and MICE.

Orsini (Chan, 2016) believes that MICE businesses in Bali will remain stable and gradually improve. He further states:

"The key to win business is trust, hence the business entrepreneurs always focus on building trust with their partners. Secondly, being proactive in reaching out to both loyal and returning clients as well as potential new clients is of utmost importance in this competitive environment. Lastly, according to Orsini flexibility - not necessarily in terms of pricing should be highlighted, but in terms of deciding and thinking along with clients" (p. 1).

One company participating in Bali's BBTF is Bagus Discovery Management Company (BDMC), who uses the annual event to promote its properties and tour products. It is interesting to study how the companies interact with buyers at the event, and how effective the marketing mix strategies are in making sales.

2. Methodology

The research method applied in this study is descriptive qualitative research. In general, this study aims to determine the role of BDMC at BBTF for tourism promotion. Data from a study undertaken by the authors was used to illustrate the active participation of the BDMC in managing Nusa Dua Bali Tours and Travel, Puri Bagus Hotel Group, and Bagus Agro in BBTF through a booth stand at the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center from 17 June 27 to 30 June 2018.

This study aims to understand the role of BDMC at the BBTF, investigated through the writer's direct involvement in handling the event by conducting surveys. Additionally, interviews were given to staff and top management of the company concerning the best strategy for attracting buyers, as well as to consumers who were asked about their observations of the event. The data was classified and analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach based on an inductive methodological paradigm, starting with a discussion before drawing a conclusion.

The primary data is directly obtained from the results of in-depth interviews with stakeholders and practitioners of the event organizing committee, as well as the researchers' direct observations during the event. The research was completed over 4 days at the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Centre (BNDCC) and samples were taken at random using survey techniques and interviews. The data was gathered from interviews with 50 sellers, 20 buyers, and the deputy of the Tourism and Creative Industry Ministry. Secondary data concerning the event was collected from the BBTF library, using website access and a travel kit provided by travel agents. The data collected will be presented in the form of tables, pictures and information. Following this, descriptive analysis is used to interpret the data and draw conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 BBTF and the Record of Attendees

The premier International Tour and Travel Exhibition in Indonesia, Bali and Beyond Travel Fair (BBTF) 2018 was held from 26 to 30 June 2018 at the Bali Nusa Dua Convention Center (BNDCC) with the theme "Exploring the Colors of Indonesia". Around 225 buyers from 48 countries and 230 sellers attended the event, including those from 3 new countries: Thailand, Vietnam and the United Arab Emirates. This event was also attended by 33 international media personnel, 21 national media personnel and 40 industries facilitated by the Badung Regency government. Table 1 shows the record of attendees at the BBTF in 2018.

Table 1: The Record of Attendances in BBTF 2018

Business Sectors	Names of industry
Hospitality	Hotels, villas, restaurants
Travel agencies, conventions, travel, MICE, corporate travel representatives	Tours & Travel, Destination Management Company, Logistic Events
Technology companies	PT TELKOM, Indosat
New regional destinations	10 New Destination including Bangka Belitung (Babel), Kalimantan, Wakatobi, Raja Ampat
National Tourism Organizations	Disparda Badung, ASITA, PHRI, ITDC, 9 Tourism Village or Desa Wisata in Bali
International participants	Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, United Arab Emirates, Timor Leste

Source: BBTF, 2018

Ketut Ardana (Bali Beyond Travel Fair, 2018) commented that "BBTF 2018 is proud to be part of the growth of tourism in Indonesia. This year's theme has promoted the potential opportunities for industry growth, with Bali being the market place."

According to the Minister of Tourism of Indonesia 2018, Arief Yahya, BBTF represents the spectrum of tourism at all levels: the hospitality sector, travel agencies, national tourism organizations, conventions and travel agencies, travel technology companies, MICE and corporate travel representatives as well as new regional destinations. He further explains that "Our biggest challenge is to build a harmonious synergy between all entities, local governments and all sectors, thereby creating the concept of Indonesia Joining. By 2019, the Ministry of Tourism has set a target to push Indonesia into the top 30 countries in the world, increasing 12 levels among all 141 countries in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) by the World Economic Forum. There are three main focuses for ministries to concentrate on this year: 1) covering digital tourism, 2) developing homestay village tourism programs, and 3) creating greater air travel accessibility. By focusing on these aspects, Indonesia will certainly have the necessary influence to improve the level of the TTCI."

Meanwhile, the Head of the Tourism Office at Badung Regency states that he was determined to support the success of the Bali and Beyond Travel Fair. The allocation of organizational and promotional budgets totaled Rp 7 billion. Funds were distributed using the Regional Budget (Revenue and Expenditure Budget) Badung in 2018, amounting to an additional Rp 7 billion. The event is considered beneficial for the government of Badung Regency as it develops the tourism industry. Not limited by budget, the Badung Regency government also designed the Sasana Culture Building located at the Badung Regency Government Center. The 15,000-capacity building is intended to be used as the main venue for BBTF every year. "BBTF no longer need to rent land in order to fulfill its events and activities, as we have now established our own premises, to be completed in 2020" (Sasana Budaya Building, red).



Figure 3. The Theme of BBTF

Source: [BBTF.or.id.html](http://BBTF.or.id/html)

Organizers of the 2018 BBTF recorded the attendances of the event, aiming to host more than 400 participants, surpassing attendance records of the previous year, being 200 attendees from 38 countries. Buyers from more than 42 countries registered earlier that month, encouraged by the massive media coverage for the event. Industry sellers, buyers and media will gather to preview new products and re-visit some of the iconic destinations, landmarks, history, culture and exhibits that are on offer. BBTF will reunite many international tourism industry leaders gathered for a series of speed-dating-style appointments. International buyers seek the best-matched Bali and Beyond tourism sellers. The event will also feature sellers from China, India, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, as well as Middle Eastern and European countries.



Figure 4. Badung Regency Views

Source: [BBTF.or.id.html](http://BBTF.or.id/html)

Meanwhile, buyers will be divided into two categories: fully hosted and partially hosted. The former comprises of tour operators who can bring in an estimated 10,000 travelers to Bali with the average price of US\$ 1,265 each per visit. Tour operators in this category will have most of their expenses covered, including full accommodation, air travel and meals. Organized by the Regional Representative Council (DPD) and the Association of Indonesian Tour and Travel Agencies (ASITA), the travel fair will focus on 'Exploring the Colors of Indonesia'. In addition to promoting Bali, the event will also highlight Indonesia's 10 most recommended and popular tourist destinations, as well as the archipelago's cultural diversity. Delegates from 21 provinces have indicated that they will be on hand to promote their respective regions. The Bali Tourism Board's head of tourism, Ida Ayu Indah, said "The event will help sell tour packages that cover tourist villages. This will empower the villages and give the travelers a unique experience." This year, ASITA will partner with Badung Regency officials to co-host the event as the sponsors for funding promotional expenses.



Figure 5. Badung Regency

Source: BBTF.or.id.html

The Badung area is a regency of Bali, Indonesia. It has experienced a stark population increase in the last decade and has become the largest of the suburban regions in Greater Denpasar. It covers Bali's most heavy tourist regions, including Kuta, Legian, Seminyak, Jimbaran, Nusa Dua, Canggu, Uluwatu, Badung, and Mengwi. The northern part of the regency is relatively unpopulated, whereas the coast and west of Denpasar from Jimbaran up to Canggu is heavily populated. Ngurah Rai International Airport is located within the regency. All of the Fair delegates will be accommodated in the area with the most luxury hotels.

During the event, the visitors of BBTF 2018 in BNDCC were impressed by the quality of the sellers at the fair as well as the variety of the promoted destinations. This includes not only the existing destinations in Bali as well as other parts of Indonesia. Half of the tour operators were keen to see the famous destinations, particularly South Bali, while the latter were more open to exploring other parts of Bali and Indonesia. Some tour operators focus on volume, so they tend to concentrate on destinations that are easy to sell, whereas specialized tour operators are looking to provide more unique experiences. This may include an exotic homestay, a trip to Komodo Island and the Gili Islands, or even a cruise. For example, one of the tour operators from Bagus Discovery Management talked through the wide variety of products on offer, describing some properties to stay at such as Puri Bagus Candi Dasa and Lovina, with its splendid beaches, Puri Bagus Manggis and Bagus Jati Ubud with a more rural atmosphere that perfect for spiritual tourism of yoga and meditation, and Bagus Agro Pelaga for agri-tourism and activities like hiking. Table 1 and 2 show the possible bespoke tour packages designed by BDMC, which were offered to buyers.

Table 2. Bali Package 3 days-2 nights November 2018

Based on Hotel	Twin Share	Triple Share	Child with Bed	Child no Bed	Single Supplement
2N Puri Bagus Jati*3	USD 45	USD 45	USD 40	USD 40	USD 30
2N Puri Bagus Candi Dasa*3	USD 45	USD 45	USD 35	USD 30	USD 25
2N Puri Bagus Manggis*1	USD 30	USD 30	USD 25	USD 20	USD 20
2N Puri Bagus Agro Pelaga*3	USD 45	USD 45	USD 40	USD 40	USD 30
2N Puri Bagus Lovina*3	USD 45	USD 45	USD 35	USD 30	USD 25

Source: BDMC, 2018

Based on the hotel properties owned by BDMC, tour packages can be designed by combining the tour products that are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Tour Programs

Tour Programs	Price (USD)	
	Adult	Child
A. Land Tours		
- Barong Kintamani Volcano	65	45
- Bedugul Gitgit Waterfall Tanah Lot	75	55
- Besakih Kertagosa Goa Lawah Karangasem	70	50
- Ubud Handicraft Monkey Forest	45	30
- Denpasar City Tour	40	25
- Mengwi Taman Ayun Tanah Lot Sunset	45	35
B. Cruises and Water Sports		
- Bali Hai Cruises	85	65
- Quick Silver	85	65
- Sail Sensation	80	60
- Island Explorer	80	65
C. Adventure		
- White Water Rafting	75	45
- Elephant Safari	80	50
- Jeep Safari	85	65
- Mountain Hiking	85	65
D. Program with Dinner		
- Uluwatu Kecak Dinner	60	45
- Ubud Evening Legong Dance Dinner	60	45
- Sunset Dinner Cruise	65	50
E. Spa and Thalasso		
- Thalasso Grand Mirage	250	100
- Thalasso Ayana	350	250
- Rumah Spa	200	75

Source: BDMC, 2018

Before a seller can attend the event, they must have an entrance pass that is obtained prior to an application. When approved, they may collect their pass from the BNDCC as shown in Figure 4 below.



Figure 8. Seller Check-in Form

Source: Organizing Committee, BBTF 2018

After obtaining an entrance pass, sellers may then enter the venue and interact with the buyers in their respective booth stands as shown in Figure 5 and 6 below.

BBTF 2018 FLOORPLAN : BNDCC Building 1

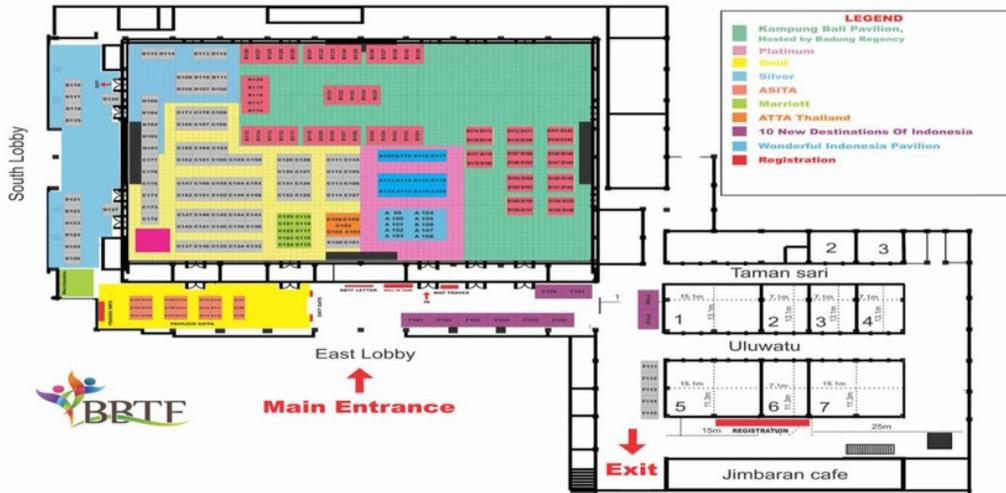


Figure 9. Floor Layout
Source: Organizing Committee BBTF, BNDCC 2018.



Figure 10. The seller is explaining tourism-industry products to a buyer
(Photograph Ginaya, 2018)

3.2 Marketing Mix Utility for an Effective-Decision Maker

Considering the potential of BBTF as the media promotion for the tangible travel services, BDMC decided to participate proactively in the event. The decision was implemented by conducting preliminary negotiations with respect to the execution of the BBTF in the BNDCC venue using Bagus Discovery which operates Nusa Dua Bali Tours. An example of handling such negotiations was the Familiarization Trip (Famtrip) on behalf of BBTF, also curated by the author.

The process began with welcoming the client at the airport, either offering to conduct a tour or transfer them straight to the venue of the event in the BNDCC. Figure 7 shows the tour guide receiving a guide order in the office.



Figure 6. The tour guide shows the names of the client to be picked-up for the guide order (Photograph Ginaya, 2018)

Having held the guide order, the tour guide then picked-up the client based on the flight mentioned in the guide order in which he arrived in Ngurah Rai Denpasar Airport at 19:20 on 24 June 2018 by Singapore Airlines as is shown in the itinerary program in Figure 8 below.



Figure 7. Itinerary Program
Source: Nusa Dua Bali Tours and Travel

The following day is filled with a tour event conducted by Nusa Dua Bali Tours and Travel, itineraries consisting of 2 full day tours of Karangasem East Bali and Kintamani volcano, before leading delegates to BNDCC as the BBTF venue to set up business negotiations.

A successful marketing campaign is one that provides value to the consumer - it may, for example, come in the form of a discount for repeated customers. The original Four P's of marketing focused on product-related marketing rather than services. Even product-based companies now typically define their unique selling proposition on the added services they provide, rather than just the features of the product. The three new "P's" have been added to the marketing mix strategy by BDMC in order to provide strategic methods to attract customers and develop long term relationships.

4. Conclusion

The execution of BBTF has given a distinctive colour to the devotion of uniform services and hospitality, particularly as it is becoming a key characteristic in the travel and tourism industry. This perspective is in accordance with the main theme of 2018 BBTF 'Exploring the Colors of Indonesia', where a spectrum of tourism is gathered to promote the huge cultural and unique beauty of the country. The proactive endeavor by the sellers to provide the best customer experiences is culminated with the strategic marketing mix at its core. This business strategy is in line with managing business endeavors characterized by intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability, hence, the operational marketing mix of the 7p's encourages sellers to think of the services they provide as part of the product. ³

The 5th edition of the BBTF is organized by the Bali Chapter of the Association of the Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA), which features 320 buyers from 41 countries and 241 sellers from 6 countries. Bagus Discovery Management Company, one of ASITA's partner, had a vested interest in the annual event, providing funding and necessary guidance. Through Nusa Dua Bali Tours and Travel, the prospective buyers from Europe were invited prior to joining the event. 15 buyers attended for preliminary negotiation at the BNDCC venue, known as the 'Familiarization Trip'. The delegates were provided transfer service from the

airport to Puri Bagus Candi Dasa hotel, where they could join various tour programs before being led to the event venue. This marketing mix-strategy is effective to prospect the buyers in the midst of tight competition among sellers, giving the company the opportunity to thrive in the operations of the travel and tourism industry.

To conclude, an online marketing mix strategy service can be carried out to provide further research, which may increase the number of buyers who will use BDMC's products. Moreover, it is suggested that BBTF will become a global marketplace that can be equally compared to other serious travel fairs, including ITB Asia in Singapore and ITB Berlin. It is expected that a business-to-business turnover of Rp 7.71 trillion (\$539.7 million) will be achieved during the fair. This is a possible due to the rigorous selection process for sellers. As a result, BBTF may become an effective media for promoting national tourism development by more efficiently managing time, finances and resources. BBTF will be held annually and reviewed holistically.

This paper has been fortunate to be able to record an authentic account from one of the tourism actors in the field.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their gratitude to DIPA, PNB, Bagus Discovery Management Company, and GATR who have provided resources for this research in order to educate society on the importance of developing the tourism sector to building wealth and prosperity.

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