UNLOCKING A NEW MARKET: A STRATEGIC MARKETING ANALYSIS FOR URBAN HOTEL THE GOLDEN STORK

Callysta Nathania Regina Nariswari, Amie Kusumawardhani[1]

Departemen Manajemen Fakultas Ekonomika dan Bisnis Universitas Diponegoro
Jl. Prof. Soedharto SH Tembalang, Semarang 50239, Phone: +622476486851

ABSTRACT

Urban Hotel TGS, a recently established hotel in Rijswijk, refined its marketing focus in March 2024 to target young business professionals working in the Netherlands, following an analysis that identified this group as its primary customer base. To engage this segment more effectively, the hotel undertook a comprehensive analysis of the highly competitive Dutch hotel industry using Porter's Five Forces, which underscored the critical role of customer loyalty. Customer insights revealed a preference for affordable rates, high-value facilities, and strategic locations, with most guests seeking accommodation via Booking.com and Google. A competitive assessment showed that Urban Hotel TGS performs poorly in location but competitively in pricing. To address these findings, the hotel plans to enhance product quality through improved cleanliness standards and customer service, while also introducing promotional packages, such as discounts and themed offers exclusive to its website. This revised marketing strategy is anticipated to positively influence key areas of the business, including organisational development, financial performance, supply chain efficiency, and sustainability practices.

Keywords: Hotel The Golden Stork (Urban Hotel TGS), Target Segment, Marketing Mix, Unique Selling Point (USP).

INTRODUCTION

Urban Hotel The Golden Stork (TGS) is a hotel that was established in June 2023 by Dennis and Marcel van der Plas, with operations commencing the following month in July 2023. Located in Rijswijk, a town in close proximity to The Hague, the hotel embraces an urban city theme, offering a retreat for individuals seeking a respite from urban congestion. Its strategic location provides easy access to culturally rich and bustling cities such as The Hague, Delft, and Rotterdam.

i. Products and Services

Urban Hotel TGS comprises 147 rooms, including 77 king rooms, 64 superior rooms, and six deluxe rooms, distributed across four floors (Alexopoulou, 2024). As of April 2024, the hotel plans to reconfigure its room allocation, converting the first two floors into pod-bed rooms, serving as an extension of its hostel branch in The Hague. This change will leave the hotel occupying only the third and fourth floors, though the exact number of rooms post-reconfiguration remains undisclosed (Alexopoulou, 2024). Room pricing is dynamic, fluctuating according to factors such as the timing of the booking, the day of the week, and holiday periods (Alexopoulou, 2024). Prices tend to increase during peak holiday seasons or when rooms are booked closer to the date of stay.

---

[1] *Corresponding author*

All rooms are equipped with modern amenities, including heaters, private showers, hand soap, private toilets, kettles, and complimentary tea and coffee-making facilities. Deluxe rooms also offer bathtubs for added luxury. Guests can opt for a breakfast service at an additional cost of €12 per person. Beyond accommodation, Urban Hotel TGS provides a range of facilities, such as free WiFi, 24-hour check-in and check-out services, baggage storage, and secure CCTV monitoring. The hotel also features a restaurant and mini bar, Petals & Pals, which opened to the public in May 2024, operating from 7 am to 10 pm on weekdays and 8 am to 10 pm on weekends. Other businesses, including beauty salons and marketing agencies, share the premises, offering additional services to guests.

ii. **Organisation Structure**

Urban Hotel TGS operates under the leadership of Dennis and Marcel van der Plas, overseeing a team of 28 employees, divided into six operational divisions (Alexopoulou, 2024).

Figure 1. Organisation Structure

iii. **Market Strategy**

During its initial six months of operation, Urban Hotel TGS did not focus on a specific market segment, aiming instead to cater to a broad range of guests (Alexopoulou, 2024). However, following a market analysis, co-owner Dennis van der Plas and the marketing team chose to target a specific segment: Young Workers. This group includes digital nomads, young entrepreneurs, and freelancers seeking a productive yet relaxed environment, particularly within the Netherlands. The decision was informed by an analysis that revealed the majority of the hotel's guests fall within this demographic in terms of age, activities, and preferences (van der Plas, 2024).

	Backpackers	Free Independent Travellers (FIT)	Retirees	Families	Groups
Demographic	20–28 years old, all genders.	19–99 years old, all genders.	62–99 years old, all genders.	1–99 years old, all genders.	1–99 years old, all genders.
Geographic	Everywhere				
Psychographic	- Are concerned of the safety. - Are reviews checkers. - Want a comfortable and quiet room with low budget. - Love kitchen supplies, public areas, tours, and kitchen areas. - Enjoy adventure. - Like to meet like-minded people.	- Prefer safe place to risky one. place - Value me time. - Like strategic places.	- Are concerned with room accessibility. - Are not really patient. - Love parking lot. - Are big fan of many facilities and amenities	- Like easy and quick check-in. - Like mini fridge and kitchen equipment/facilities. - Like a rest place and children area. - Like parking lot.	- Wifi is a must - Are quality searchers. - Want gathering spaces/common room. - Like restaurants in the hotel and their services.

Figure 2. Old Target Segments

NEW TARGET SEGMENT	Young Workers
Demographic	24-35 years old, all genders.
Geographic	live in the Netherlands
Psychographic	- are workers, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, freelancers, or digital nomads - are reviews-checkers - love traveling and healing - love treating themselves - would like to have more connections and new experienc

Figure 3. New Target Segment

The team of Urban Hotel TGS thought that their offerings, such as affordable room rates, well-equipped rooms, opportunities for networking with like-minded individuals, meeting spaces, bike rentals, and various dining options, are particularly attractive to this segment. Moreover, the forthcoming addition of pod-bed rooms is expected to enhance the hotel's appeal to this demographic. Therefore, the hotel's prior lack of a targeted focus necessitates a reworking of its marketing strategies to optimise engagement with this segment.

To this end, the research question explored in this study is "How can Urban Hotel The Golden Stork effectively engage its target segment of Young Workers?"

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

To address the central research question, the writer has outlined several sub-questions: (1) Who is the target segment of Urban Hotel TGS, and what are its characteristics, needs, and wants?; (2) Who are the competitors of Urban Hotel TGS, and what are their characteristics?; (3) What are the competitive advantages of Urban Hotel TGS?; (4) What are the Unique Selling Points (USPs) of Urban Hotel TGS?; (5) What are the results of the current marketing strategies employed by Urban Hotel TGS?; (6) What changes should Urban Hotel TGS implement to better engage the target segment?; (7) Are these strategic changes feasible?; and (8) What are the potential impacts of these changes on the company? The formulation of these sub-questions has been carefully structured and sequenced in alignment with the research methodology that the writer intends to employ.

The writer hypothesises that Urban Hotel The Golden Stork will require a more targeted and focused marketing strategy aimed specifically at their primary market segment, Young Workers. However, it is anticipated that some of the current marketing strategies can still be effectively implemented. Despite the hotel not having initially focused on this segment, the majority of its guests have been identified as Young Workers, indicating that the current approach is aligned with the target market but has yet to be optimally executed.

To address these questions, the writer begins by conducting a contextual analysis that includes SWOT, Porter's Five Forces, and customer analysis, concluding with strategy development based on the customer journey and marketing mix. Contextual analysis, as described by Iversen (1991), involves analysing individual behaviours within a group or environment. Seckin (2023) categorises this analysis into micro, meso, and macro levels, where microanalysis focuses on internal aspects using tools like SWOT, meso on the industry through frameworks like Porter's Five Forces, and macro on broader, national strategies such as PESTLE or DESTEP.

SWOT analysis is utilised to identify the internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect a company's competitive position (Phadermrod et al., 2019, as cited in Wu et al., 2024). Complementing this, Porter's Five Forces assesses the

external factors influencing industry attractiveness, including competition, supplier and buyer power, and the threats of substitution and new entrants (Wellner & Lakota, 2020).

Customer analysis deepens the understanding of product preferences and consumer behaviour. Cai and Yang (2024) argue that this analysis is essential for optimising products to meet consumer needs, a sentiment echoed by Alsemaree et al. (2024), who stress its role in refining offerings to better serve customers.

Lastly, the customer journey maps out all interactions between customers and the company, which is crucial for strategy formulation. Lemon et al. (2016) highlight that understanding the customer journey enables companies to enhance customer experience, while Rosenbaum et al. (2018) assert that it provides insights into improving innovation at critical touchpoints. The RACE framework, developed by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022), further breaks this journey into Reach, Action, Conversion, and Engage stages, helping businesses track and optimise customer interactions from awareness to long-term engagement. Implementing this in Urban Hotel TGS's marketing strategy would likely enhance its success in attracting and retaining its target market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a combination of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources to address the research sub-questions. Each sub-question is answered using specific research methodologies, data collection methods, and both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

i. **Primary Sources**

The primary data was gathered through direct interviews, a method described by Widdowson (1996) and Dale (1998) as a structured form of two-way communication designed to obtain in-depth information (Anggraeni et al., n.d.). Following this approach, the writer conducted interviews with key personnel at Urban Hotel The Golden Stork, such as the owner, Dennis van der Pal, and the marketing manager, Konstantina Alexopoulou, to gain a deeper understanding of the company's objectives. Additionally, interviews were held with 12 individuals from the new target segment to analyse their characteristics, needs, and preferences. The use of direct interviews was essential due to the limited publicly available information on the newly established hotel. The sample size of 12 interviews was chosen based on the concept of data saturation, as supported by Guest et al. (2006), which suggests that this number is generally sufficient for qualitative research when using purposeful sampling methods. This ensures that no new information or themes emerge from further interviews, focusing on the quality and depth of data over quantity (Grady, 1998; Saunders et al., 2017).

ii. **Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources, including published books and journal articles, were also vital in supporting the data and findings of the study. The writer referred to reputable sources such as academic journals (e.g., Blythe, 2006; Kotler, 1978), industry reports (e.g., Hospitality Industry in the Netherlands, 2024), and official data from governmental and credible institutions (e.g., CBS, 2024) to provide context and support for the primary data collected.

iii. **Tertiary Sources**

Tertiary sources, including Artificial Intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly, were employed to enhance the clarity and flow of the report. These tools assisted in refining the writing and ensuring it was easily understandable, without allowing AI assistance to dominate the content creation (Kok et al., n.d.).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis conducted shows that the proposed marketing strategy for Urban Hotel The Golden Stork (TGS) aims to improve the hotel's competitive position in the local hospitality market by focusing on three key areas: enhancing product quality, optimising promotional efforts, and increasing direct bookings. This strategy was developed in response to customer feedback, competitor analysis, and current market trends, aligning with the hotel's goal of attracting young business professionals in the Netherlands, identified as a crucial target segment for the hotel's growth.

Product enhancements are a core part of the proposed strategy, designed to improve customer satisfaction and overall experience. First, strict cleanliness protocols should be implemented to ensure high hygiene standards in guest rooms and common areas. This is vital, as cleanliness has been identified as the most important factor influencing customer decisions. Second, the strategy involves upgrading in-room amenities and facilities by offering customisable options, such as different types of television or pillows, and other extras that match the specific preferences of guests. Regular checks and replacements of furniture and amenities will also be carried out to maintain a consistently high-quality standard. Third, the hotel will focus on enhancing service quality through comprehensive staff training. This training will emphasise hospitality etiquette and multilingual capabilities, particularly ensuring that staff can communicate effectively in Dutch to meet local market preferences. In addition, staff will use language badges to improve communication with guests from various backgrounds.
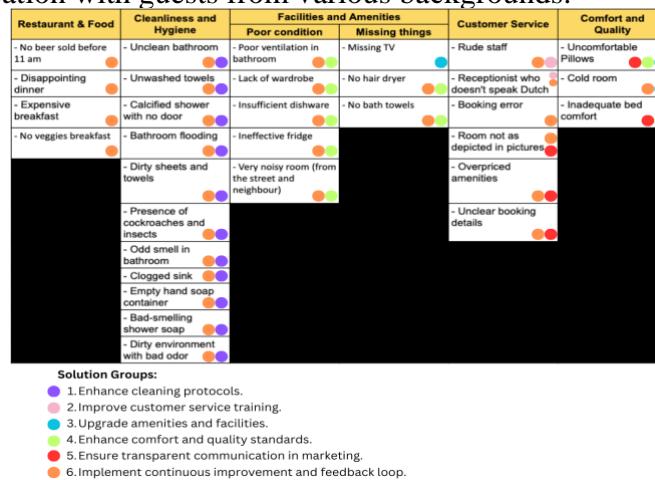

Figure 4. Problems and Their Solution Groups

Solution	Details
Enhance Cleaning Protocols.	- Make cleaning schedules, standards, and rules.
Improve Customer Service Training.	- Hold comprehensive training and feedback for staff and customer service etiquette. - Use flag pins to show customers which language(s) staff use. - While having someone who is not a Dutch speaker as the receptionist, make sure there is at least one Dutch speaker working on the same shift. - When it is time to change workers, ensure the staff who deal directly with customers, especially the receptionist, can speak Dutch.
Upgrade Amenities and Facilities (Open for more options).	- Have customizable options for TV and pillow choices with additional prices.
Enhance Comfort and Quality Standards (For existing products).	- Always check the equipment, availability, quality, and condition of guest room equipment and facilities after guests check out. - Always check the condition and quality of hotel equipment and public facilities once a month or two.
Ensure Transparent Communication in Marketing.	- Write information as completely as possible and in as much detail as possible honestly.
Implement Continuous Improvement and Feedback Loop.	- Conduct monthly meetings to discuss customer feedback, goals achieved and unachieved, problems, and accomplishments.

Figure 5. Solution Groups Details

Promotional strategies are designed to increase the hotel's visibility and attract its target market through a range of diverse promotional initiatives. These include new promotional packages tailored to different guest needs and occasions, such as the "Urban Love Nest" — a romantic stay package with special decorations; the "Urban Direct Deal," offering a 10% discount for direct bookings through the hotel's website; the "Cityscape Escape," a weekend stay package with a 15% discount; and the "Urban Culinary Delight" and "City Bite & Bed" packages, which combine accommodation with dining options. To maximise effectiveness, the strategy suggests focusing promotional efforts on channels where target customers are most active, such as Google Ads, Google Maps, and popular booking platforms like Booking.com, while reducing reliance on less effective platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Furthermore, the strategy highlights the importance of improving direct booking channels by optimising the hotel's website to provide clear, straightforward information and exclusive offers, thus reducing dependence on external platforms and their associated commission fees.

The strategy is also structured around the customer journey using the RACE framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) to ensure ongoing engagement with customers. In the "Reach" phase, the focus will be on maximising visibility through Google Ads, Google Maps, and booking platforms to attract potential guests. The "Act" phase involves ensuring that the hotel's website provides comprehensive and clear information to help potential customers make informed decisions. In the "Convert" phase, the hotel will offer appealing and exclusive packages that meet guest preferences, thereby increasing conversion rates. Finally, the "Engage" phase will use personalised email marketing campaigns to maintain contact with guests after their visit, giving them options to customise the frequency and content of communications.

Proposed Marketing Strategies	Stages	Platform	Strategies
RACE	Reach	Google Ads	For promotion and deals.
		Google Maps	Keep the information updated and enhance the quality to improve the rating.
		External Booking Platform	Keep the information updated and (if allowed) add a picture of a special offer/package when booking through the official website so people will be directed to the official website.
	Action	Website	- Add the promo banner and notification - Add a page for offers
	Convert	Deals and benefits	Make some packages and deals (sub-sub chapter 6.1.2.)
	Engage	Email marketing	Make a thank you email asking for feedback on newsletter preference.

Figure 6. Proposed Customer Journey – RACE

The proposed marketing strategies are expected to significantly enhance Urban Hotel TGS's competitive position by closely aligning with the preferences of its target market. The introduction of new packages and improved product offerings is projected to raise occupancy rates from 40% to 75%. Enhanced cleanliness, upgraded amenities, and improved customer service are likely to result in higher satisfaction scores, fostering customer loyalty. Moreover, by focusing on direct bookings and reducing reliance on commission-based platforms, the hotel anticipates a positive return on investment (ROI) of 923.85%, assuming occupancy targets are met. These efforts are expected to drive sustainable growth as the hotel continues to monitor and refine its strategy based on ongoing feedback and market conditions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Urban Hotel TGS, a new hotel in Rijswijk, has refocused its marketing strategy to target young business professionals in the Netherlands, a key segment among its clientele. The analysis confirms the hypothesis that while some existing marketing strategies remain effective, additional strategies specifically tailored to this target group are needed. These include enhancing product quality, improving service standards, and offering exclusive promotions directly on the hotel's website. By strengthening cleanliness protocols, customer service, and introducing special themed offers, Urban Hotel TGS aims to build trust and credibility with young workers, ultimately enhancing its competitive position.

REFERENCES

Alsemaree, O., Alam, A. S., Gill, S. S., & Uhlig, S. (2024, May 15). Sentiment analysis of Arabic social media texts: A machine learning approach to deciphering customer perceptions. ScienceDirect, 10(9). https://doi-org.proxy.undip.ac.id/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e27863

Blythe, J. (2006). Essentials of Marketing Communications. Pearson Education Limited: Essex (UK)

CBS. (2024, May 15). *Labour participation; key figures*. Wikipedia. Retrieved June 5, 2024, from https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/figures/detail/85264ENG#NetLabourParticipationRate_24

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation, and Practice (8th ed.). Pearson.

Grady MP. *Qualitative and Action Research: A Practitioner Handbook.* Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation; 1998.

Guest G, Bunce A, Johnson L. How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods.* 2006;18(1):59–82. doi: 10.1177/1525822X05279903.

Hospitality Industry in the Netherlands - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts 2024 - 2029. (2024, January 4). Motor Intelligence. https://www.giiresearch.com/report/moi1406047-hospitality- industry-netherlands-market- share.html#:~:text=The%20hospitality%20industry%20in%20the%20Netherlands%20has%20generated%20revenue%20of,8.25%25%20during%20the%20forecast%20period

Kotler, P. (1978, August). Harvesting strategies for weak products. *Business Horizons*, *21*(4), 15-22. ScienceDirect. https://doi.org/10.1016/0007- 6813(78)90109-X

Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey. Journal of Marketing, 80(6), 69-96. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420

Phadermrod, B., Crowder, R. M., & Wills, G. B. (2019). Importance-performance analysis based SWOT analysis. International Journal of Information Management, 44, 194–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.03.009

Porter, M.E. (1985). Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance. The Free Press, New York, NY.

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2017, September 14). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, *52*, 1893-1907. Springer Link. 10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Seckin, B. (2023). Business Case Lecture [Lecturer].

van der Plas, D. (2024). [Reference details about Urban Hotel TGS].

Wu, J., Zhao, N., & Yang, T. (2024, January). Wisdom of crowds: SWOT analysis based on hybrid text mining methods using online reviews. Journal of Business Research, 71. ScienceDirect. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114378