

Perceived Value E-Ticketing as Sports Entertainment Options

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Abstract

Through the advantages of online and electronic ticketing services, the sporting entertainment industry has been able to increase the production and effectiveness of their customer relation management department. While simultaneously minimizing and perfecting the current concerns of electronic ticketing such as; costs, safety measures to both consumers and companies, delivery modes, comparisons to traditional ticket services, and technological sophistication. An empirical study of business professionals in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania metropolitan area revealed that age, amount of disposable income, and education were not predictive of the degree of customer satisfaction derived from the use of e-ticketing for sports events, possibly pointing to the roles of technology and convenience transcends all these demographic variables. Concern for identity theft was not a major impediment preventing customers from seeking value in participating in e-ticketing transactions, but evidence supported the roles of word-of-mouth advertising and consumer trust are still the foundations for expanding the marketplace for online tickets.

As evident from the present study and personal comments of many respondents, there is considerable importance attached to WOM advertising in the acceptability of e-tickets in general and for sporting events in particular. WOM is one of the most effective and traditional ways to generate new customer business without the added expense of marketing and the sales force to drive business. It also has a tendency to reduce help desk calls since customers go to their referral source to answers to their questions. Many vendors promoting e-tickets make intelligent use of e-mails and features, such as eBay's feedback as mechanisms for customer referrals. With today's evolving mobile communication technologies, social networking has also become a powerful source for word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising, especially with the inherent power of such social websites such as Twitter™, Facebook™, Myspace™, blogs and many others, customers are presented with a variety of convenient options that allow them to freely sing their praises of an exceptional purchasing experience or air their complaints about a poor transaction. Some product and/or service providers allow customers to write reviews of a product they have purchased. If fellow customer reviews are well received, there should be a tendency for others to purchase the same product over competitor sites that either have poor reviews of a comparable product or no reviews at all.

Companies offering e-ticket options should take advantage of these types of WOM technologies in order to attract new customers and not put as much effort into developing strategies to accomplish this. Their focus should be on customer retention since new customers are not always returning customers. The underpinning for acceptance of e-ticketing options dwells on the importance of customer trust. Many customers, especially first-time buyers and first-time Internet users, find trust a crucial element in making purchasing decisions. With the increase of fraud and websites being one of the primary mechanisms for fraud, many undecided consumers are leery of making Internet purchases or even providing confidential information online. Companies still must take this into account when developing their online strategic plans in order to promote trust and confidence. They should disclose information about the company, the products and services it sells and above all its security and privacy policies if e-ticketing technologies are to realize its bright future.

KEY WORDS: *business strategy, empirical, e-tickets, online identity theft, sports ticketing, professional intellect.*

Relevance to Marketing Practitioners: This case study is relevant to marketers and researchers in dealing with qualitative performance incentives for crowding funding initiatives.

TRACK: Sport Marketing