



Marketing Strategies in the Aviation Industry

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Declaration by the Guide

This is to certify that the Ms. Aaliya Khan, a student of MBA – Aviation Management, SAP ID 500064871 of UPES has successfully completed this dissertation report on “Marketing Strategies in the Aviation Industry” under my supervision.

Further, I certify that the work is based on the investigation made, data collected and analysed by her and it has not been submitted in any other University or Institution for award of any degree. In my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and utility, as a dissertation towards partial fulfilment for the award of degree MBA.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Indian aviation industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. In 1991, only public airlines in India enjoyed monopoly in its operations and businesses therefore it could dictate its own terms to its passengers who had no other choice but to accept whatever had been available irrespective of quality of service, pricing, hospitality and comfort. The scenario changed following globalization and air space having opened to competitions. The subsequent events moved very fast as more and more new players entered with lot of advantages of being new operators as compared to the airlines, which had been in operation since independence and therefore accumulated lot of fat, which needed to be immediately dispensed to face the emergent competition that posed as threats to its existence and substance. On the other hand, some of the private players are very much concerned about their passengers as well, for some of them are implementing low price strategy to attract the passengers. Now as passengers are playing the key role in aviation industry, all the airlines are trying to capture the lion share of the market. However, most of the airlines are introducing various lucrative strategies to retain their own passengers and they tried to attract more new passengers towards them, but still brand switching is increasing day by day. So, in this aggressive competitive situation, the success of Airlines is very dependent on the passenger service provided at all levels before, after (at airport) and during the journey (in the air as air-borne), to make their passengers satisfied. Now a days, passengers have become very choosy about where they spend their hard-earned money. If they decided to take a trip, they want it to be great, the Airlines need to get along with the program and look at the experience from the passenger's perspective. It could be just a simple thing to solve the difference, but both the public as well as private airlines need to get into a conversation with their passengers in order to figure this problem out.

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1.1: OVERVIEW

AIRLINE MARKETING

In the context of contemporary competitive market knowing the details of marketing becomes and more essential and airlines marketing is a fascinating subject. The market share which an airline holds depends largely on how effectively can market product. The aim of this Unit is to familiarize with the unique characteristics of airline's product and the various constituents of airlines marketing. This Unit deals with marketing planning, scheduling, pricing, distribution and promotion of an airline's product. There are certain common components in marketing services or product. However, in marketing it is essential to know the characteristics of product before for determining marketing strategy.

Thus, have to first understand the special features of airlines marketing.

Some of these are as follows:

i) Highly Perishable Product

The airlines product is extremely perishable as it cannot be stored for future sales. Once boarding is closed on a particular flight, all the unutilized seats on that flights go completely waste. Airlines profitability and success of marketing functions depends greatly on its ability to fill-up the available capacity with revenue generating traffic viz. passenger and cargo.

ii) Need for Fine Market Segmentation

An airline's market consists of various market segments with different service expectations, different price sensitivities, different travel motivations, etc. Examples of such market segments are first class passengers, who do not care about the price of a market but expect only the best and most luxurious service standards and need to be pampered by the airline's staff every inch of the way. Another example is business traveller, who mostly travels on an expense account and expects good schedules and connections, efficient ground service and comfortable on-board service. Family holiday traffic is more concerned with discounts in air fares than the schedules or service standards, etc. For labour traffic or shopper's traffic, price is the most important factor. It is vital for an airline to optimize its yields and revenue from various market segments by positioning itself correctly in the market place.

iii) Dynamic Market

Since airline's product is a service consisting basically of an experience for the

passenger, it has to result in various degrees of satisfaction or dissatisfaction from that experience. This in turn affects perception about the product. Besides, competition among airlines is hard and the market dynamics of pricing, promotion and distribution are liable to change very rapidly. The challenge for an airline in marketing lies in manipulating its marketing mix viz. product, price, promotion and distribution. This is done to get a passenger in front of its checking-in counter ready and willing to fly that particular airlines after paying good money; and then sending him or her away happily to the destination so that the passenger is willing to come back another time and always to the same airline on any route. This is the essence of airline's marketing. Whatever an airline's marketing, manager does, he cannot afford to lose sight of the basic purpose of the marketing function, which is to optimize the yield and make an airline's operation profitable. Whatever do for product improvement, for sales promotion, publicity and advertising, for distribution of product in the market place, by giving discounts and incentives - ultimately it all has to result in generation of income for the airline in excess of its cost of operation of air services.

iv) Dependency

The airlines product is dependent on certain external factors like facilities, rules, regulations and security check ups etc. at the airports. Though these are same for the passengers of all the airlines but the customers often associate them with the airline they are flying with.

1.2: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to show that strategic marketing management is an important concept in today's business world. The study is to show that strategic marketing management can help be used to overcome the complexities of marketing, then to deal with the customers' expectations and stakeholder and in the end to bring together the influences of the changes that takes place in an environment based on a limited set of resource capabilities. It is also important to create some strategic opportunities to manage the changes those are associated within an organization. Through marketing, an organization works at maximizing shareholders returns and provides maximum satisfactions to the customers. This is mainly done by creating and working on what is known to be the competitive advantage by identifying, providing, communicating and most importantly delivering value to its customers and thus developing long term relationships. Strategic marketing management this states that has huge benefits for the business. The airline industry is an important part of the economy for almost all the countries. This huge sector has experienced many ups and downs in the last few years. It is therefore is of interest of the

researcher to find how the concept of strategic marketing management has helped Indigo airlines.

A comparison of all the domestic carriers in India shows a trend that proves how consumers have become aware of their needs and how they're up to date about which airline provides the best combination of services and affordable fares.

The airlines' marketing team plays the most important role in accomplishing the goal of being on the top of the consumer's mind.

The domestic carriers – Indigo Airlines, SpiceJet, GoAir and Air India – the flag carrier are now leaving no stone unturned in keeping up with the consumer's needs and giving each other a bottle neck competition to be the market leader.

All airlines have a different approach to meet their goal. We will list down their marketing mix and see the trend in consumers regarding their choices of airlines and see if the marketing mix is working best for which airline.

1.3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

While all airlines have their respective marketing mix, since the shutdown of Jet Airways – the number one carrier in India, Indigo airlines' marketing mix has made it emerge as the number one airline in the minds of the consumer and subsequently in the market.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The term marketing is mostly found to connote a business function that is peculiar to an organization. Marketing is mostly viewed as a task where findings are made in order to stimulate buyers for what the firm produces. This takes into account the development of the product, its pricing along with the distribution, the communications and most importantly in relatively big firms there is a continuous need to change with the customer requirements and also to develop new products or to make modification to existing products in order to meet the needs of their customers. But gone were the times when marketing was view to be something that was linked with pushing the products because in the new era it caters to customer satisfaction and is most likely viewed by organizations as a business activity. Looking into what marketing is? What are the kinds of phenomena which are found to be termed as marketing phenomena? What comprises of a marketing system? How the activities in marketing can be distinguished in comparison to non-marketing activities? Getting to the point what exactly is the proper definition and concept that comes into the domain of the work that is termed as 'marketing'? The American Marketing Association is found to define the term marketing as the performance of the activities in a business that actually directs the flows of its goods or if they provide services than services from the producer to the main consumer. Even though this notion came under a lot more criticism but still the end results tell that marketing is not what can be easily defined. There is no one who has being able to provide a very clear definition of the term marketing. In reality marketing is found to have many definitions. Drucker (1996), marketing is defined as to identify the customer's wants and needs and to add value in the products and services in order to satisfy the identified wants and needs. This definition is found to have three main components. First one is to identify the wants and needs of the customers, as the customer is known to be the most important factor in the overall marketing. Second component states that it is all about adding value to assure that the wants and needs of the most important customers remains for longer time duration. Thirdly the firm in the long run needs to generate profits that are to be sustainable. When it comes to effective marketing in the changing and global demands that are taking place today then the producers are most often found taking and working upon marketing and applying marketing to even production and shipping areas. There was some modification in definition by Doyle (2000) that is of the view that marketing is like a management process that is working to maximize shareholder's returns thus by creating a competitive advantage by communicating, delivering real value to the customer and thus in the end developing a long-term relationship with them. This definition at that end is very clearly defining the main objectives of marketing and what should be done to evaluate its performance. The main contribution made by marketing in the

organization is by formulating the right strategies so to choose the right customers, building relationships of trust with them and in creating a competitive advantage.

2.1: REVIEW AREA BROAD

Strategic marketing management is an important concept in today's business world. The study is to show that strategic marketing management can help be used to overcome the complexities of marketing, then to deal with the customers' expectations and stakeholder and in the end to bring together the influences of the changes that takes place in an environment based on a limited set of resource capabilities. It is also important to create some strategic opportunities to manage the changes those are associated within an organization. Through marketing, an organization works at maximizing shareholders returns and provides maximum satisfactions to the customers. This is mainly done by creating and working on what is known to be the competitive advantage by identifying, providing, communicating and most importantly delivering value to its customers and thus developing long term relationships. Strategic marketing management this states that has huge benefits for the business. The airline industry is an important part of the economy for almost all the countries. This huge sector has experienced many ups and downs in the last few years. It is therefore is of interest of the researcher to find how the concept of strategic marketing management has helped different airlines use different business models to affect the psyche of customers.

2.2: REVIEW AREA NARROW

The major points this study takes into account is that how these airline create a perfect fir between their strategies and mark
ets itself so well that it now has a leading position in their targeted segments. The dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of the organization and its competitors as to how they maintain relationships with their customers and how these relationships are getting affected through strategic marketing.

2.3 DEFINING STRATEGIC MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Aaker was of the view that the strategic marketing management was designed in order to help the management so that they can make better strategic decisions and also to create clear strategic visions which also takes into consideration the creation and changing and retaining of the strategy of the firm. The process of the strategic marketing

management is found to include the analysis of both the firm's external and internal environment. External analysis basically looks into the outside world of the business as like the areas which have a very huge impact on the business and the way it operates. Areas which are required to be taken into account while an external analysis is being performed include the customer analysis, as in what are the segments of the customers, their motivation and the needs that are unmet. Along with that a competitor analysis is also found to be useful and can be done. In this analysis, information can be collected about the objectives, strategies, strengths that the competitor possess and the weaknesses and the costs it incurs all are viewed and in turn the collected data is used in formulating strategies which can benefit the firm in the long run. According to Jan (2002), the strategic marketing management includes three stages. In the first stage the company is required to do a thorough external and internal analysis. The external analysis can be done through the industry analysis the most popular being porters five forces. Competitor and customer analysis are also a part of the external analysis. The internal analysis can be done with the help of SWOT analysis and also through an understanding of the operations, management, marketing and financial components of the business. The next stage of the strategic marketing management process is defining a strategic posture. This provides an overview of the strategic development of the organization. The third stage is of market planning. This is where the marketing plan is devised which meets the needs of the external and internal environment but also fits the strategy of the organization. One of the key and most important notions that is found to be underlying the basic principle of strategic marketing management is the firm's relative position among its competitors as stated by Wilson and Gilligan (2005) in their book 'strategic marketing management'. They also mentioned that along with the firm's position as to where it exist in its competitor circle, a strong need is to take into account the unit costs, the quality of the product or service that they provide, the most important element that is the prices, and then market share and profitability of the firm are to be viewed all under the strategic marketing management. The contribution that all these factors make in the strategic marketing management which in turn lead to and provides profitability can be estimated by using the multiple regression models. This model will help in identifying and locating the impact that the relatively weak variables have and in turn it can offset along with

the strong variables. Like the low market share can be found to offset the high quality of the product. Once this model is used by an organization, they can access what are the strengths and weaknesses of the firms are and what are the strengths and weaknesses of the competitor so that they can work on the best source which can ultimately lead to competitive advantage by means of a strategic marketing management process.

2.4 THE DISCIPLINE OF MARKETING & THE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

McCarthy (1960) worked on a very structured approach that was related to conventional marketing and it has its focus on the management related to marketing mix and the 4 P model. This also consisted of limited variables used for decision making which became very important for developing the theory of marketing and for practicing it at the same time. Regardless what the industry is and whether they are offering a service or a product or even that can be something else, the dealing and content for the relationship of customers and the variety that's being found in the contacts of customers have no moved ahead and beyond the simple and traditional interfaces which was what assumed to be based on conventional marketing. There are areas like relationship marketing and a service which shows that marketing is moving ahead and the growth in this key area is tremendous. Webster et al., (2005) explained that marketing is what seems to be seen and losing the credibility it has and hence a downfall is taking place in marketing. There are a number of reports that are found in USA and similarly from Europe which shows that the Chief Executive Officer normally has a negative impression related to marketing from the works of Welch (2004) and Cassidy et al., (2005). In the very famous issue in the year 2005 of Journal of marketing in which the emphasis was made on the need to look for marketing renaissance, known professors in marketing were found to raise their voices about the marketing theory. Brown (2005) explained in one of the essay that it's important that the team members from the top management are required to discuss the importance customers have in their firms and especially when it comes to large firms. When they work on customer management they don't consider marketing to play a very important role.

2.5 MARKETING DIRECTS TO VALUE CREATION

Sheth and Uslay (2007) in their study suggested that marketing requires taking on a goal that is to create value for its customers. This was not regarded as something of a new concept in literature of marketing but until this time period this view was silenced by the transaction-oriented traditions that exist in marketing and models in marketing. Holbrook (1994, p. 22) stated that in the year 1990 the concept of value was that it was found to be the fundamental basis required for all the activities in marketing. Rust and Oliver (1994) in their study explained that in the end it is the value that attracts the customers and often lures customers away from the competitor. Eggert et al. (2006, p. 20) were of the view that by offering superior value to the most important and influential of all i.e. customers, it is essential in order to create and maintain long-term relationships with the customers. Looking at it generally, the main goal of marketing can in turn be formulated in the manner stated as follows:

“The main goal of marketing is to make sure that the firm engages its customers in all the processes while having the aim to support the creation of value in the designed processes which will be mutually beneficial.”

But the main concern is how can this value for the customer be understood? Who is the person who is responsible to create this value for the customer? The current research into the field of customer value clearly depicts a trend that is different from the value in exchange view to the notion where the value is not something that is being produced by the supplier but it's something that is done by the customers when they use goods and services and when they make interactions with the suppliers.

Gronroos (2008), in the year 1979 taking into account the context of services marketing came to the conclusion that it is quite reasonable to take into consideration both the goods and the services to be used and bought by the consumers so that to give what one can contribute as service or even value satisfaction. At the same time he was of the view that the goods are found to present some potential value or utility to the consumers. When a purchase of the good is made and after that he initiated and implemented a number of activities that are required for transforming the potential value into what is known to be the real value for the consumer, on the other hand a service is found to be an activity all in itself which has an inbuilt ability that it can transform the potential value that the consumer is supposed to have to what is known as real value for the consumer.

2.6 MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT MARKETING

Palmer (2000) claimed that there are a number of misunderstandings about marketing. These misunderstandings mostly relate to what marketing is actually all about. Kyle (2004) suggested that many people are found to view marketing as a series of well-formed tactics and gimmicks and they define marketing as pyramid programs. When answering this very important question that takes into consideration what marketing actually is Gronroos (1990), argued that marketing is actually a philosophy that guides the whole thinking of the organization and along with that it's a way in which all the functions and activities of the firm are found to be organized. Similarly, it's a set of tools and many important techniques like promotion, pricing, packaging, designing and distribution. For this reason, Palmer (2000) provided his definition of marketing as to be about utilizing the resources that an organization has in order to meet and deal with the changing needs of the customers who are the one organization are found to be dependent upon. Kotler et al. (1999) are found to be arguing about what marketing is and they stated that it's a social along with managerial process through which individuals as well as groups are found to obtain what they require as in their needs and wants by creating and exchanging products and most importantly value that with others.

2.7 MARKETNG FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Most of the authors are the ones who discuss marketing as like a discipline in business and that is from the point of view of manager. It somehow related to how marketing is associated with companies and most importantly organizations. But looking into the scenario one can easily tell that marketing is not just a subject which is about and related to being a manger in marketing, because this discipline is now found to be very encompassing. According to Hill (2002) & Holt (1998), marketing is something that is affecting everybody because as consumers, somehow we cannot escape what the market is about and in this way even the ones who are trying to live a very simple life gets affected. Marketing is not something that is just like an economic activity. It is what drives the society of consumers along with that it supports the culture of the consumption. Marketing is what one can say appears to be affecting more and more people all around the world these days but the effects it has are not what one can say to be new. Looking back over the centuries, marketing was something that influenced the way empires were built, the languages evolved, the technologies came into application and transport routes came into existence. Everything can be traced back into the concept of marketing.

2.8 INTRODUCTION TO THE AIRLINES

2.8.1 INDIGO AIRLINES:

IndiGo is India's largest passenger airline with a market share of 49.9% as of July, 2019. It primarily operates in India's domestic air travel market as a low-cost carrier with focus on our three pillars – offering low fares, being on-time and delivering a courteous and hassle-free experience. IndiGo has become synonymous with being on-time.

Since its inception in August 2006, it has grown from a carrier with one plane to a fleet of 240 aircraft today. A uniform fleet for each type of operation, high operational reliability and an award-winning service makes it one of the most reliable airlines in the world. IndiGo has a total destination count of 82 with 60 domestic destinations and 22 International. This includes seven destinations: Silchar, Shirdi and Mysore in India, Yangon in Myanmar, Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, which are open for sale. Twelve codeshare destinations beyond Istanbul on Turkish Airlines are also open for sale. They include, Athens (ATH), Budapest (BUD), Brussels (BRU), Tel Aviv (TLV), Malta (MLA), Paris (CDG), Dublin (DUB), Copenhagen (CPH), Prague (PRG), Vienna (VIE), Zurich (ZRH) and Amsterdam (AMS).

IndiGo is not said to be the most efficient low fare operator domestically but is also comparable with global low-cost airlines.

2.8.2 AIR INDIA

Incredible India is also known for Air India airline that is a national air carrier Air India is owned by Air India Limited that is a government's company. It has both Airbus and Boeing in its fleet and flies to over 90 domestic and International destinations. The airline was founded in 1932 by J. R. D. Tata, and at that time it was known as Tata Airlines. After World War II, Tata Air was renamed Air India.

The operations started in July 1946 i.e. 71 years ago. Air India's has the Maharajah or the Emperor and the logo of the company has a flying red swan with orange Konark wheel inside it. The airline was launched with the objective to provide convenient air connectivity to the people of the country. Here are some lesser known facts about Air India.

The concept of the exclusive service dedication to its customers is what Air India was known for, JRD Tata had an obsession for perfection, that simply reflected in the airline service. The airline set high standards for other Asian carriers, which included, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways, Cathay Pacific, and others right from 1940.

Air India was always known for its interesting advertisement ideas. It is also known for launching taglines that immediately grabbed the attention of the people.

We all are well-aware of the Air India Maharaj that came up with some different and naughtier with every new launch, and it remained to be the prominent part of the company's promotion endeavours. The Maharaj actually symbolises high living and graciousness which tend to make the travellers feel pampered and classy.

2.8.3 SPICEJET

SpiceJet is an Indian low-cost carrier based at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi. SpiceJet one of India's largest airlines, serving domestic destinations across India. The airline commenced international operations in Oct-2010 and now provide services to overseas destinations including cities in the Asia Pacific and Middle East.

With a dynamic fare structure, SpiceJet offers fares that are affordable and significantly lower than most airlines. With contemporary interiors, modern graphics and vibrant colours, SpiceJet is very much like today's traveller - practical yet stylish. A SpiceJetter will feel 'this is the smart, international way to travel, I've made the smart choice'. SpiceJet is committed to make sure you feel good at the end of a flight, arriving at your destination - fresh and on time.

SpiceJet's mission is to become India's preferred low-cost airline, delivering the lowest air fares with the highest consumer value, to price sensitive consumers. We hope to fulfil everyone's dream of flying! With India's economic and business growth, the percentage of traveling population is burgeoning. More and more Indians are traveling for both business and pleasure and everyone needs to save both time and money. SpiceJet's vision is to address that and ensure that flying is for everyone.

2.8.4 GOAIR

Go Airlines (India) Ltd. is an aviation foray of the Wadia Group. It operates under the brand GoAir. In November 2005, GoAir launched its operations as a low-fare carrier to commoditize air travel and offer airline seats at a marginal premium to train fares across India. The airline currently operates over 300 daily flights and approximately 1800 weekly flights across 32 destinations – 25 domestic and 7 international.

The GoAir route network spans across prominent business metros as well as key leisure destinations across the Indian subcontinent. GoAir currently renders its services at the airports in Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Bagdogra, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kochi, Kolkata, Kannur, Leh, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Port Blair, Pune, Ranchi, Srinagar, Abu Dhabi, Bangkok, Dubai, Kuwait, Malé, Muscat and Phuket. Through this route network GoAir ensures a smart value-for-money option for both business and leisure travellers, without compromising on either safety or service factors.

GoAir's distribution network has been well-researched. Following a thorough evaluation of the available mediums, the airline has introduced a gamut of options, specially designed to make tickets very accessible to its passengers. GoAir hosts convenient online booking options on its website www.GoAir.in wherein a passenger or his associate can book GoAir tickets anytime round the clock, 365 days a year from the comfort of their home. For those passengers who do not have a credit or a debit card or access to a web networked computer, tickets can be booked from other distribution mediums including Travel Agents or via GoAir's Call Centres. Tickets can also be booked from GoAir airport counters.

GoAir is positioned as 'the Smart People's Airline'. Its captivating theme, 'Fly Smart' is aimed at offering passengers a consistent, quality-assured, and time-efficient service through 'pocket-friendly' fares. The airline uses a state-of-the-art Airbus A320 aircraft fleet.

GoAir executes its business model on the basic three-tier principle - 'punctuality, affordability, and convenience'. The airline has recently partnered with Navitaire, a leading technology provider of automated aviation and travel-related software solutions, for its Passenger Service System.

Adding a milestone to its journey, in October 2016, GoAir passed the International Air Transport Association's Operational Safety Audit (IOSA).

As part of its expansion plan, GoAir has placed a firm order of 144 Airbus A320 Neo aircraft. The delivery of the same has begun and currently has 47 Aircraft as part of its fleet.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND PLAN

3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGIES

Data collection is a way of collecting information regarding the undertaken research so that meaningful results and analysis can be carried out. There are two major methods of data collection – Primary and Secondary.

Primary data

Primary data is data originated for the first time by the researcher through direct efforts and experience, specifically for the purpose of addressing his research problem. Also known as the first hand or raw data. Primary data collection is quite expensive, as the research is conducted by the organisation or agency itself, which requires resources like investment and manpower. The data collection is under direct control and supervision of the investigator.

The data can be collected through various methods like surveys, observations, physical testing, mailed questionnaires, questionnaire filled and sent by enumerators, personal interviews, telephonic interviews, focus groups, case studies, etc.

The primary research can be carried out in two broad methods which are as follows:

Quantitative research:

It is a scientific approach where the researcher works upon and tries to find answers to the research questions by providing a statistical analysis. The quantitative results in this research either approves or disapproves are hypothesis.

Qualitative research:

It is also a scientific approach but here the difference is that the results obtained are not supported by quantitative data as rather results are based on theoretical information.

Methods used for Primary Research:

Surveys and questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires are the one of the most common methods which is used ingathering the information also known as primary data.

Interviews

The interviews are common but a tricky and efficient way of collecting primary information. The interviews in this case can be taken face to face, over internet or even on phone.

Observations

Observations is also known and used as a great way to collect primary data. The researcher in this case is mostly found to have a checklist which can help him in collecting the required information. This method helps in gaining insight about a specific event.

Focus Groups

The collection of data by focus groups is a way of overcoming the weakness associated with personal interviews. In this method a moderator is responsible and he or she usually supervises the group of around 8 or 10 people.

Secondary data:

Secondary data implies second-hand information which is already collected and recorded by any person other than the user for a purpose, not relating to the current research problem. It is the readily available form of data collected from various sources like censuses, government publications, internal records of the organisation, reports, books, journal articles, websites and so on.

Secondary data offer several advantages as it is easily available, saves time and cost of the researcher. But there are some disadvantages associated with this, as the data is gathered for the purposes other than the problem in mind, so the usefulness of the data may be limited in a number of ways like relevance and accuracy. Moreover, the objective and the method adopted for acquiring data may not be suitable to the current situation. Therefore, before using secondary data, these factors should be kept in mind.

The secondary research also includes two methods of analysis:

First method is the statistical analysis in which published information is used to form an analysis about the specific topic and numerical and mathematical analysis is done.

The second is the information research which uses the qualitative information present in the journals, textbooks and also the electronic resources.

Methods of Secondary Research:

Case study method

The case study method is used when the researcher requires an in-depth analysis of a well-defined and important particular issue. The case study relevant to that issue at hand will help in better understanding the scenario in which the case is taking place. It can help by providing either explanatory or descriptive view or even both.

Company Websites

Whenever the research is company specific the first and foremost source for collecting information that is regarding the said company is its official website. The official website contains all content related to the company and is most of all the perfect reliable source as content and information available on the official webpage of a company is what is copyrighted and the company can be held responsible if the information provided is not true.

Media Releases

A media release is actually a document that contains information for the stakeholders and which is given away as like a method of gaining attention of the media. The press releases that are specifically provided by the companies are what are important in shaping the expectations of the market.

Advantages of different research methods:

Interviews:

This is a method to directly interact with the interviewee and help extricate answers of very complex questions to get benefit from those answers.

Helps interviewer to focus on a single person who can benefit him by helping him in making sound analysis.

The interviewer can work on clarifying any doubt at the very moment interview is taking place.

Observation:

Observation is a way of learning about the people without interfering in their setting

It allows the researcher to study the subjects in their real settings.

The data provided by observation gives a detailed account about different situations. Thus, it is a richer and more thorough than the survey which albeit studies a large number of people but provides less rich information.

Observation helps in studying various individuals at the same time and also helps the researcher in analysing the interaction between the people.

In some cases, people are not comfortable with cooperating with the researcher in these cases particularly observation remains the only way of getting the data.

Focus Groups:

The method is better than interview.

It is exploratory and also guides to the attitudes of the of the people in the focus group

Helps in providing in depth information to the researcher

Visual aids can be used.

Secondary Research:

Sources of information are already available.

Easy and timely way of doing research.

Less costly than the primary research

Provides a clarification of the topic

Case Study:

The data can be examined at micro level

Gives a practical solution and analysis to a problem

Gives detailed insight into a specific topic

Useful in exploratory researches

Case studies including wide range of topics on several companies are easily available.

Disadvantages of different research methods:

Observation:

Expensive way of data collection.

The information provided is limited.

Cannot be used when large samples are involved.

Interviews:

A very expensive approach.

Very time-consuming method of research.

Focus Groups:

Information gathered may be ineffective

Number of respondents is limited.

Moderator must have necessary skills to moderate the focus group.

Secondary Research:

Reliability and authenticity of information must be maintained.

Information can be incomplete.

Information is easily available in market and no competitive edge.

Case Study:

Cannot be generalized to majority of population.

Case studies may have a biased view about a situation

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS USED:

Surveys / Questionnaire:

Surveys or Questionnaires are one of the most common methods which is used in gathering information also known as Primary data.

Case study:

The case study is used the researcher requires an in-depth analysis of a well-defined and important issue. The case study relevant to that issue at hand will help in better understanding the scenario in which the case is taking place. It can help by providing either explanatory or descriptive review or both.

3.3: JUSTIFICATION OF THE APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGIES

The current dissertation can be called as an exploratory study which helps in explaining the current events of a particular nature. It is mainly secondary research where information is gathered from all the main published material mainly from online sources. The study is thus a qualitative study and the focus is on case study method.

The case study method has been selected after carefully analysing all the available methods for research. It helps in answering the questions related to the current circumstances. The case study method is also appropriate because the events under study are out of the control of the researcher and the dissertation requires in depth study in a short span of time.

To prove the findings of the case study, the survey/questionnaire method is used by the researcher to put forth findings of a limited sample size which is relevant for the majority of the population in similar demographics.

3.4 SAMPLING

The data collection procedure will be used for 4 airlines – Air India, Indigo airlines, SpiceJet and GoAir. All of these organizations are part of the airline industry India. Although they belong to the same industry, they follow different business models.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The way in which research problem works out is known as research methodology. The methodology takes into account several steps takes into account which the researcher undertakes so that she solves a problem. The research methodology not only helps in getting answer for a particular problem but looking into it also helps the researcher to analyse different methods that are available to her, to understand the logic and reason for using a particular method and also to understand why other methods that are available are not useful for the purpose of the study .

The research methodology used for this dissertation has a three-step process:

1. Collection of data
2. Finding and analysis
3. Concluding the research based on the information gathered throughout the dissertation

3.6 NATURE OF STUDY

This study is based on qualitative research because it actually studies strategic marketing management and its impact on the two main companies of the airline industry both having different business models. And it is thus evaluative in nature. A step by step that is a systematic approach is taken into consideration is also employed to conduct an extensive research on this dissertation. Secondary research has been conducted mainly and to support the facts, primary research has been conducted through a survey.

3.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After understanding the importance of the topic and shedding some light on relevant literature it is possible to state the questions this research attempts to answer. Following can be some of the research questions:

What are the advantages of adopting strategic marketing management?

How the customer-business relationship is affected by using strategic marketing?

Have the organizations created a fit between all their strategies?

3.8 RESEARCH QUALITY

For establishing the quality of any research, Yin (2003) provided four tests namely reliability, construct validity, internal validity and external validity. Following is a brief summary of what these tests are and how this research meets these quality criteria:

Construct validity

means establishing right operational measures for the case study which can be done in three ways including the use of multiple sources of evidence, establishing the chain of evidence and getting the research draft reviewed by the key informants. This thesis has used multiple but limited sources of evidence. However, the information provided in this thesis has been validated by crosschecking it using more than one source.

Internal validity

refers to establishing a causal relationship between certain events. This thesis through its findings and analysis attempts to make inferences about the existence of a causal relationship between marketing innovation and the company's service level and costs. The resulting relationship however is solely based on secondary information.

External validity

is a type of test which refers to generalization. It involves establishing the domain to which the research findings might be generalized. This thesis lacks external validity as it is based primarily on four case studies and has only one subject under study i.e. Indigo. For enhanced generalized results, future study on a larger scale would be needed.

Reliability

requires that the same results be generated if the case study is repeated. Although the chances that the same study would be conducted again are limited but if the same study is undertaken, the results drawn will be the same. However, there is a possibility that under that environment, some of the recommendations might have already been implemented and may not be valid any more.

CHAPTER 4: FINDING AND ANALYSIS

4.1: MARKETING MIX OF THE TOP 4 AIRLINES IN INDIA:

INDIGO AIRLINES:

Set up in the year 2006, Indigo Airlines is one of the cheapest domestic airlines in India which is owned by InterGlobe Enterprises and Mr. Rakesh Gangwal. This marketing mix of Indigo airlines discusses the 4P's which have been executed in an excellent manner by Indigo such that Indigo is one of the leading low-cost carriers in the country. In the marketing mix of Indigo airlines, the price plays a crucial role which we will discuss further.

Indigo Airlines is considered one of the best airlines that offer professional services at economical prices. Starting its services with six aircrafts on 4th of August 2006, IndiGo now has 240 of them. It adds a new plane every 45 days and sometimes even faster. Within no time IndiGo dethroned Kingfisher and stood as the second largest player in aviation industry only after Jet Airways. In the year 2013, Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation announced that IndiGo is the second and the fastest growing airline service in the continent.

As of June 2019, it is the largest airline in India by passengers carried and fleet size. It has a domestic market share of 49.9%. The airline operates to 79 destinations – 58 domestic and 29 international

It is important to note that the airline operates all major cities in India. One of its major competitive advantages is that the air tickets can be booked online and the customer services are very friendly at the same time.

Products in the marketing mix of Indigo airlines

The core product of Indigo airlines is of course Air travel. The traveling is mostly for passengers but the cargo line of Indigo airlines is growing fast as well. Indigo airlines, being the country's largest low-cost carrier offers one of the best airline services in the country. For the past three years, Indigo has managed to create profit whereas its competition has been making loses. This has largely been due to the fact that the airline increased its capacity and efficiency in its services while containing costs. As a way of increasing capacity, new flights have been introduced in order to get more passengers.

For instance, while the total airline capacity in India reduced by 4%, Indigo managed to increase its capacity by unprecedented 39%. Another strategy that Indigo applied is deft route planning such that it increased the number of aircrafts per route instead of only increasing the number of routes. The low-cost model strategy, purchasing only one type of aircraft and keeping the operational costs as low as possible coupled with an emphasis on punctuality are the main reasons for its success even when the airline industry in India was going through its rough.

Place in the marketing mix of Indigo airlines

Customers who want to book their tickets can do so online or through various agencies throughout the country. The airline is trying to reduce the headache one has to go through to get a ticket and that is why it has availed the online tickets. The airline's destinations can be found throughout the major cities of the country. As a matter of fact, there are about 29 current Indigo destinations but expansion is ongoing. While that is the case, the airline has ensured that its core strategies are maintained. The core strategies include keeping the airline the most affordable airline in India and keeping flying a pleasant experience.

With its fleet of 240 aircrafts and more than 1300 flights daily, it operates 89 domestic and international destinations while its competitor SpiceJet as 108 of its aircraft operating 49 destinations. Thus, the strategy is to provide more capacity on fewer routes than thinly spread itself over many destinations. This is advantageous in that: it helps contain costs because new destinations will require infrastructure costs and help in creating more customers because they will be viewed as reliable in the few destinations they operate.

Promotion in the marketing mix of Indigo airlines

No airline has worked harder at capturing the local market better than IndiGo Airlines. The airline relies on its cost and availability to promote its brand across the market. This investments in advertisements are low because it affects the cost. However, Indigo did come out with a few TVC's of its own as well as does good advertising online. The airline has adopted a strategy of connecting flights to other destinations from one destination such that customers will not have to book another airline to arrive to their destination. For instance, it has connected four flights from Ranchi to Delhi, Mumbai, Patna and Bangalore and plans are underway for it to add Kolkata and Raipur.

Although not a direct marketing strategy, this strategy has seen it gain more customer base because customers would want to cut costs by using just one aircraft to reach their destination. Other promotion methods used by Indigo aircraft include media vehicles like billboards, print media advertising and advertising on travel portals.

Price in the marketing mix of Indigo airlines

As already mentioned, price is one of the major factors in the marketing mix of Indigo airlines. It is because of price and maintaining costs that the airlines has received so much success. IndiGo Airlines is one of the cheapest, if not the cheapest airline in India. In fact, that happens to be its competitive advantage when travellers are comparing prices. This makes it one of the most sought airline services in India because of its quality services as well.

The complete credit for Indigo's success goes to the cost control department at Indigo airlines. Indigo uses computer-generated mechanisms to determine how much petrol it will need from Point A to point B. Thus, its savings on petrol is high and airline petrol is very costly. Furthermore, the servings on flight are minimum. Indigo wants to control cost but does not build relationships with its customers. This might irk some but then the airline is the only airline which is making good profits even at this stage.

With decrease in prices and increase in the number of passengers every day, Indigo faces a tough competition from SpiceJet and Air India. With a lion's share of 50% after Jet's closure, it would be safe to say that Indigo provides what no other airlines can offer when it comes to cheap prices. There are also constant discounts that keep customers coming back.

BCG Matrix in the Marketing strategy of Indigo Airlines

No-frill segment with no meal and no entertainment options are stars in BCG matrix as due to affordable & low-cost option it has high demand in the market. But because of the options available, competition is high as well.

AIR INDIA:

Air India is the flag carrier airline of India, headquartered at New Delhi. It is owned by Air India Limited, a government-owned enterprise, and operates a fleet of Airbus and Boeing aircraft serving 94 domestic and international destinations. The airline has its hub at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, alongside several focus cities across India. Air India is the largest international carrier out of India with an 18.6% market share. Over 60 international destinations are served by Air India across four continents. It is the second largest domestic carrier in India with a market share of 13.9%.

Product in the Marketing mix of Air India:

Air India at one time had two products. Passenger and cargo transport. However, the cargo transport of Air India has been decommissioned in 2012, and the airlines only operates through passengers. For passenger transport, Air India uses a fleet of Boeing and Airbus planes. The flight, along with in-flight entertainment and its premium lounges are some of the main products of Air India.

Pricing in the Marketing mix of Air India:

Air India has different prices based on the route of Air traffic as well as the distance and finally the number of halts on the way. At the same time, within a flight, two kinds of pricing exist – Economy class and Business class. The pricing of Air India is competitive pricing as none of the airline operators can nowadays exist without keeping competition in mind. Along with this, the travel via Air India is not much renowned, and hence the airline cannot demand premium pricing.

Promotion in the Marketing mix of Air India:

Point of purchases i.e. ticketing counters at traveling agencies, online options (E.g. Membership promotions, couple tickets, Tourist packages for agencies and various other individual and corporate offers). The fact that Air India is an Indian government operated airline in itself creates a brand equity for the airline. Besides this, regular banners and outdoor promotions are carried out by Air India. Finally, the airline offers various trade discounts and trade tie ups to promote its own business via the B2b channel

Place in the Marketing mix of Air India:

All Airline tickets are nowadays booked online so that place in Air India does not matter much. Most online retail sites like yatra.com, make my trip, Expedia have Air India airlines listed on their portal, and this is where people can buy Air India tickets.

SPICEJET LIMITED:

SpiceJet Limited is an Indian low-cost airline headquartered in Gurgaon, India. It is the third largest airline in the country by number of domestic passengers carried, with a market share of 13.1% as of March 2019. The airline operates 312 daily flights to 55 destinations, including 47 Indian and 7 international destinations from its hubs at Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Product in the Marketing Mix of SpiceJet:

Spice Jet has been ranked at second position as the largest airline in India in terms of passengers carried. It has put its onus on comfortable travel and exceptional performance that includes crew hospitality and aircraft's technical specification. Spice Jet employs a knowledgeable and trained crew to provide efficient and friendly handling.

It has a fleet of 108 aircrafts that includes Bombardier Dash, Boeing 737-900ER and Boeing 737-800s. Aircrafts are ideal for comfortable and safe flying for medium and short distance trips in weather conditions of India. Spice Jet offers SpiceMax premium services whereby a passenger can obtain extra benefits like seats with extra legroom, complimentary meals and priority boarding, baggage handling and check-in at a higher fare.

Place in the Marketing Mix of SpiceJet:

Spice jet occupies 13.1% of the market share since March 2019. Its operations include three hundred and six flights on a daily basis to 47 domestic and 7 international destinations. It has spread its domestic presence to include several routes like Delhi to Chandigarh, Mumbai to Delhi, Hyderabad to Tirupati, Chennai to Cochin, Bangalore to Pune, Delhi to Kolkata and Bengaluru to Pune.

It has spread its global presence to include international routes like Chennai to Colombo, Mumbai to Dubai, Delhi to Kathmandu, Cochin to Dubai, Delhi to Bangkok and Kolkata to Bangkok. It has its headquarters base at Delhi and operational hub at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad.

Price in the Marketing Mix of SpiceJet:

At the end of the financial year 2019, estimated market share of Spice Jet was 13.1% making it the third largest airline in India. Indian marketplace is price-sensitive and in order to create a niche market of its own, it is very important to adopt suitable pricing policy that is in tandem with common masses. The company has projected its brand as a low-cost carrier without any frills and has targeted cost-conscious middle-class and lower-middle-class section of society as its potential customer.

It faces stiff competition from several rival airlines and has adopted a competitive pricing policy to gain a reasonable advantage over its competitors. Its ticket prices are economical and very affordable and hence have resulted in garnering good revenues. Spice Jet has also implemented a promotional pricing policy and offers discounts and incentives at periodic intervals to lure greater passenger share.

Promotions in the Marketing Mix of Spice Jet:

Spice Jet has a solid presence in the airline industry because of its advertising and branding policies. It advertises via print and social media platforms like newspapers, Facebook, its own website and portals of travel agents. As part of its promotional strategy Spice Jet offers discounts on group bookings, discounts at periodic intervals and special offers like tickets at rupees 99. Its popular taglines include Flying for everyone; Red Hot spicy and Get more when you fly.

GOAIR:

GoAir is an Indian low-cost airline based in Mumbai, India. It is owned by the Indian business conglomerate Wadia Group. In October 2017 it was the 5th largest airline in India with an 8.4% passenger market share. It commenced operations in November 2005 and operates a fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft in all economy configuration. As of September 2019, the airline operates over 230 daily flights to 30 destinations, including 24 domestic and 6 international destinations, from its hubs at Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Kannur. Its current market share is 10.8 percent and is the 4th largest airline in the country.

Product in the marketing mix of GoAir:

The product strategy and mix in GoAir marketing strategy can be explained as follows:

GoAir is one of the largest low-cost airline carriers in India. GoAir offers domestic flights across India in select routes in its marketing mix. It also facilitates combo purchase of flight plus hotels through its website for a competitive price. Under the GoHolidays scheme, customers can book holiday travel destination package designed for Honeymoon Couples, Pilgrimage and beach visits through GoAir. There is a separate web portal dedicated for the travel booking. GoAir is known for its efficient processes and in a short span of time it has shown its presence in domestic airline industry in India.

Price in the marketing mix of GoAir:

GoAir offers one of the cheaper domestic air fares in India and is working on a model of penetration pricing. GoAir also facilitates booking of Flight plus hotel through its website and has collaborated with PAYTM where users can enter the coupon code to avail the discount. GoAir offers flight tickets as cheap as Rs 949 on certain occasions. Its low pricing in its marketing mix has attracted several visitors across India and in a short span of time it is considered one of the most sought airline services due to the quality offered. GoAir faces severe competition from other low airlines such as Indigo and SpiceJet.

Place in the marketing mix of GoAir:

GoAir flights travel to almost every major destination across India. The GoAir flight tickets can be booked from its website and other ecommerce sites such as MakeMyTrip, Yatra etc where users can instantly book a flight as per their

convenience. Through GoAir website customers can book travel insurance, use mobile app to check status, Pre-book Excess Baggage, Pre-book Seats, Check Inflight Menu. The flight tickets can be purchased from the airport by visiting the company desk.

Promotion in the marketing mix of GoAir:

GoAir uses the tagline FLY SMART to inform customers about contemplating various factors when booking flights and the company offers the better cost to benefit ratio. GoAir carries out various promotion activities throughout the year, some of the offers are discounted check in and discounted fare for soldiers on Republic day. Under SMART Student FARE scheme, students are given 5 % discount on the base fare and additional baggage allowance of 25 kg on producing valid student id card. Under the low fare scheme, GoAir offers one of the cheapest flight pricing in India. GoAir also effectively uses social media, online ads, billboards etc to promote its brand.

All the above airlines being in the service sector, there are 3 additional P's added to their marketing mix which are more or less same for all of them:

People:

Being leading airlines, they are people centric organizations. The staff is warm and friendly in the crew and encourage customers to have a pleasant travelling experience. The pilots are hired after analysing their flight experience in terms of number of hours of flying experience. The air hostess display courtesy towards passengers and help them resolve their issue during flight travel.

Physical Evidence:

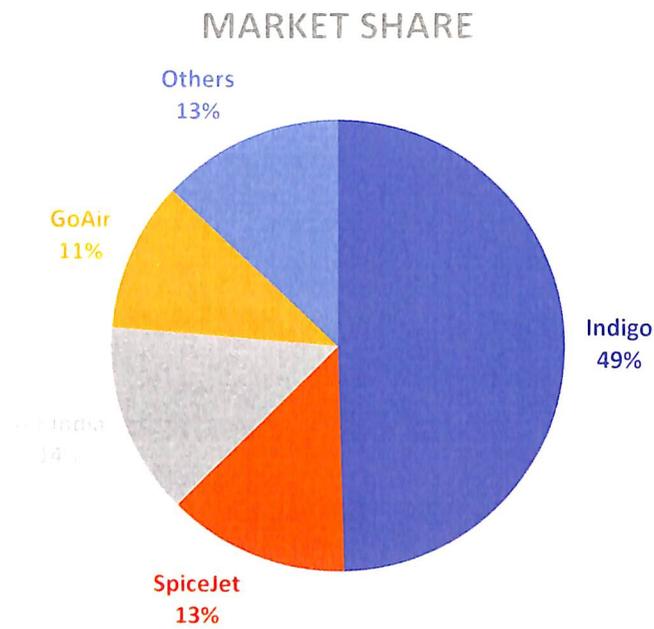
Their biggest physical evidence are their aircrafts. The airlines employ latest technology and service in its aircraft and since it works in domestic circuit, the food served is as per the standards of the airline industry. The airlines incorporate the brand colours in its design of the aircraft. They are known for its quality service and commitment to the customers. The boarding passes, website, offices, kiosks etc all form the physical presence of the brand.

Process:

The process involved is stringent and accord to aviation authority guidelines. Pilots need to go through training in terms of covering the number of flight hours and training handle critical situations. The company employs highest quality standards in

terms of quality of food served and service. Hence, this summarizes the marketing mix of all the airlines.

Market share of all the airlines in India as of June '19 looks like this:



4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

A survey was conducted by the researcher to find out whether the marketing strategies are working for the above airlines. The survey was conducted with a group of people in the below demographics:

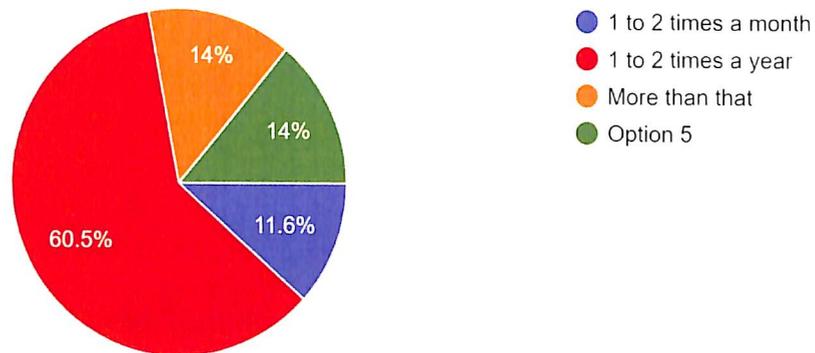
Age group – 20 to 40 years

Occupation – Service

Annual income – 3 to 9L

How often do you travel by air?

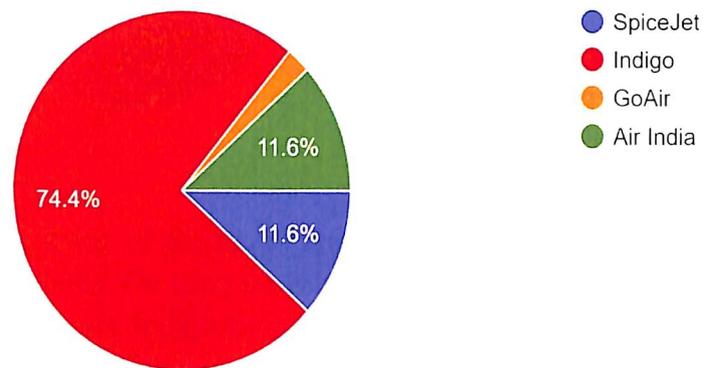
43 responses



*Option 5 – less than that

Which airline do you prefer for domestic travel?

43 responses

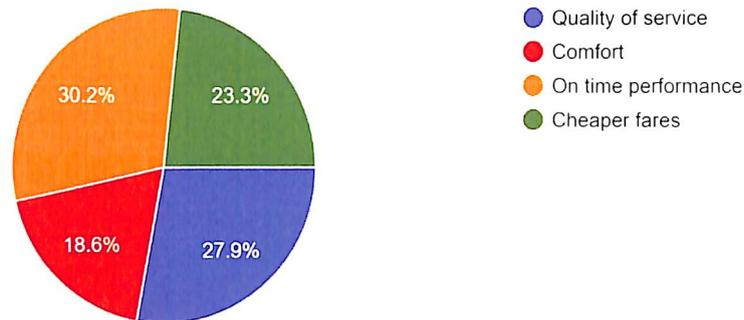


The following can be inferred from the chart above:

The major chunk of the population that has acquired the disposable income and is willing to spend on air travel is from the service sector. Indigo Airline, visibly has the most powerful marketing team and thus more than 70% of the population prefers the airline due to its affordable fares, quality of service and on time performance.

Why do you prefer the above airline?

43 responses



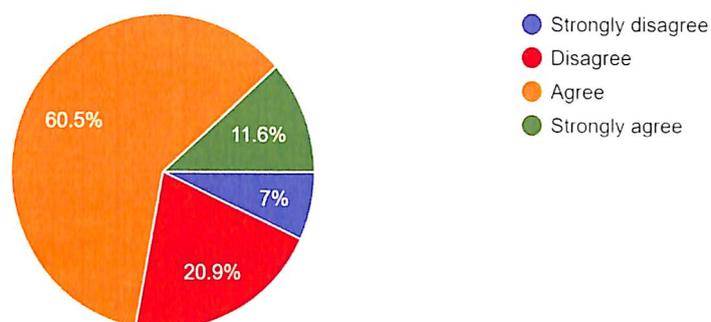
The skies now have a lot of traffic as well and delivering passengers on time is a struggle for all the airlines. On time performance is the major criteria for choosing the airline. This is the area where Indigo excels very smartly by using the strategy of **“Under promising and Over delivering”** i.e, the published flight time is always more than the time actually taken to fly from one place to another, which explains its on time performance. Other airlines like SpiceJet and GoAir are now catching up with the trend, however Indigo has made its mark and tough spot before the other airlines could even realise.

The second most important criteria in choosing an airline is the quality of service and the People’s marketing strategy of Indigo beats the other airlines in that area as well because the staff goes through some rigorous training before they face the passengers where they are taught to deal with any situation that gets thrown at them along with other disciplines that are important to learn to handle passengers travelling from multiple cultural backgrounds.

The next criteria is cheaper fares and the strong marketing team of Indigo has left no stone unturned in giving the cheapest fares that they can for the combination of the on time performance and quality of service they’re offering. Customers are willing to spend the fares for Indigo all the more due to the shutting down of Jet Airways and thus it is the best option available to them.

Availability of in flight meals is important while choosing an airline.

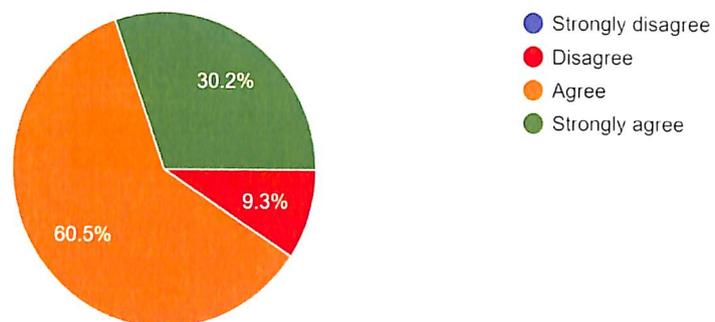
43 responses



Although a major chunk believes that its important to have in-flight meals, due to the quality of service that low-cost airlines provide, they're willing to shell the extra bucks for buying their meals on board, especially on domestic travel since majorly the population travels for business and the flight time is not more than 2 hours for most of the sectors. Low-cost airlines are thus very practical in their approach.

Helpful airline staff drives passengers towards the airline.

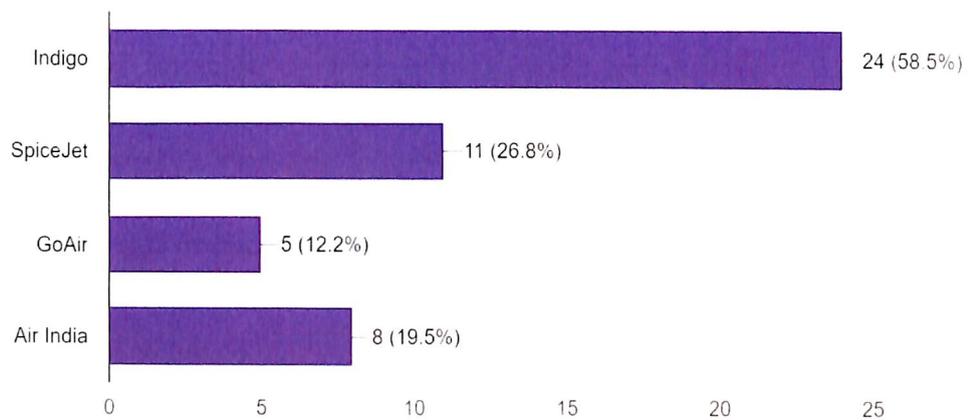
43 responses



Training the staff is extremely important in the service sector because they come across people from different financial and cultural backgrounds and it's very critical to know how to approach each situation with different kinds of people.

Which airline's advertisement do you remember seeing/hearing last?

41 responses



Indigo in the past year has started a lot of international and domestic sectors and hence the advertisement has been at its peak. The airline is all over print media, billboards and hoardings and evidently has made it to the top of the mind of consumers, which means that the marketing team's strategies is working very well for the airline.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review it can be concluded that when we talk about customers and till the very end the product that is to be delivered to the customers, all it requires is strategic marketing. It's through and through strategy that when managed in the right order will provide great benefits. The strategic marketing management is what takes into account both internal and external analysis. External analysis can be done in many ways like industry forces or customer analysis. The fact is that both the internal and external analysis will provide information that can help a firm to work and take strategic decisions. Strategic marketing management provides great benefits which can be clearly seen as Indigo airlines was able to reap.

Indigo is known to be the leading low-cost Indian airline and its business model is found to be compared with the famous SpiceJet. The company has a vision to turn India blue and with this it is working upon maximizing their development of network. On the other hand, Indigo is found to be utilizing the services of primary airports and this helps them to get more customers being in the form of leisure as well as business travels. What made Indigo came up with thought was proper strategic marketing management. The company is striving to provide lower fares to its travellers and for this their strategic focus is upon smart cost management. In the end the services are designed to provide value to the customers and to be profitable.

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