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E-Service Innovation: A Case Study of Shohoz.com

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Abstract

Electronic services are shaping a new trend around the world. The development of information technology and widespread use of the Internet makes it easier to perform any work anywhere. New service trends are emerging. Bangladesh, as a developing economy is also working to build a Digital Bangladesh. Automation systems are taking central roles in all sorts of work, from government to private. One of the newest of these trends is the introduction of e-ticketing and home delivery. In 2014, a joint collaboration between Bangladeshi and European investors constructed the idea of shohoz.com, the first ever online ticket booking and home delivery system. During the busy times of the year, especially during the festivals like Eid, Puja and other holidays, people rush to their homes in villages by water, road and train. The struggle to get a single ticket has prompted this initiative. In this study, a qualitative analysis has been made on shohoz.com. The process of its operations, marketing and sales has been analyzed. Words of satisfied customers are taken by conducting a small survey on selected customers who have received the service of shohoz.com. The only thing that makes it unique is the introduction of delivering ticket in homes. Having an intention to make people easily get tickets, shohoz.com has created a new type of service in Bangladesh. Successfully identifying the niche in the market, it is one of the e-service innovations of the 21st century. Service innovations like this will encourage the research and entrepreneurship opportunities that this symposium aims to achieve: Service Imperatives in the New Economy: Service Excellence for Sustainability.

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1. Introduction

In the last years, alternative ways to the traditional service providing have been introduced, taking advantage of the latest advances in information and communication technologies. The introduction of the Internet has eased the communication among the people living in societies across culture. Existing services are slowly adapting with technology. From government, business to public transport, technology is putting its feet. At one side, it is making the existing service obsolete, and on another side, it is strengthening the quality of the typical service. The increasing competence in the market is an important factor that drives the adoption of new technologies and innovation (Dawe, 1994) as companies search for new opportunities to cut costs by improving process efficiency or developing new products. The complementary factor of e-service is seen in today's transportation and communication services. Throughout the world, electronic service for transport communication has made it easier to travel from one place to another. Electronic ticketing and reservation system is one of the components of it. However, in the case of Bangladesh, it is only adopted few years ago. The total number of Internet Subscribers has reached 47.421 million at the end of May; 2015 (BTRC, 2015). A nationwide policy of making the country Digital has ushered in a new way for technology as the country developed its base of technology only within the last 10 years making the goal of Digital Bangladesh within 2021 in sight. From that point of view, last year, few investors from Europe made a joint venture in Bangladesh to provide online ticket-booking and home delivery system; first ever of its kind in this country. This initiative is attracting a lot of attention and officially made it open to capture this niche of the market by many companies.

2. Problem statement and objective of the study

Transportation system in Bangladesh is mainly divided into three ways: Land-ways, Waterways and Skyways. The land ways are divided into road and rail systems, while waterways are mainly dependent on Launch, ferries and steamers. The country has 14,97,72,364 people within its 1,44,570 sq. km which indicates 1015 persons in per sq. km (BBS, 2011); making it increasingly difficult to provide proper accommodation and transport facilities. The people however live mostly in cities and Dhaka, the capital of the country is the largest and called megacity. These people have homes in their villages and come to Dhaka to support their families and for better income. However in special occasions and holidays they travel back to their villages. As the transportation systems are not sufficient, most of the times people rush in while returning homes. Thus ticket for one becomes a golden deer for some. The line in front of the ticket counter for bus, train or steamer stretches from the previous day of deliverance and sometimes people spend their night in front of the counter. Even during the month of Ramadan, people stand in line eating Iftar in the dusk & continue their stay till the next day eating Sehri at dawn. To tackle this situation, if people could book tickets & receive tickets in their homes, they won't have to stay in line to get tickets and thus could avoid the sufferance. The government railways and some transportation services started offering the e-ticketing and mobile-ticketing some time ago. Some private companies also offer e-booking. But the only lacking they had is that they didn't deliver the ticket to the homes of the customers. If customers receive tickets directly in their homes then they can just easily go to their desired transport and get on easily. Targeting this niche of the market in 2014, shohoz.com came in the market to provide e-ticketing and home delivery system.

The main objective of this study is to provide an alternate service through electronic medium and converge it with the traditional service in light of the example of shohoz.com in the transport structure.

Specific objective of this study thus is two-fold:

- To analyze the operation, structure, promotion and marketing strategies of shohoz.com
- To suggest and recommend the convergence of technology with existing transportation system showing the example of shohoz.com

3. Literature review

Investment in ICT is the most intensive and dynamic in services (OECD, 2000). In earlier studies on innovation, the service sector has been characterized as a mere applier of technological innovations developed in the

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