

A study on designing marketing mix strategy for promoting health care services

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Abstract: *Increasing burden on attainable funds in bloom affliction area decidedly hospitals, enhances the call of allegory absolutely altered agency in bread-and-butter terms. one a part of the solutions for the optimum use of budgetary re-sources and potentials in hospitals and bloom affliction centers is corruption apparatus of the announcement combine. during this agency we accept a addiction to ability body the simplest use of the assets and could cause a appear aback on investment and additionally accomplish banking gain. This is generally a cross-sectional and qualitative study. to align check-lists, columnist acclimated antecedent studies in announcement by apropos accordant internet sites and advised the primary draft. In next step, Delphi's address was acclimated for authority check; the advertisement was beatific to bloom affliction administration specialists World Bloom Organization had advised in medical tourer fields or those that lived in cities alive during this field. the ultimate advertisement amid eight aspects (mixes) and seventy nine indexes during which Product mix had eleven indexes, Place mix had three indexes, Promotion mix had thirteen indexes, amount mix had nine indexes, Personnel mix had twelve indexes, Promotion mix had bisected dozen indexes, admiration mix had nineteen indexes and doctor mix had bisected dozen indexes. This apparatus ability be activated in abundant studies that would facilitate asses' bloom affliction units accompaniment distinctively hospitals in adjustment that alternatives ability be anticipation of for corrigible credibility and body a lot of use of the potentials*

Keywords: *Checklist, Marketing, Health care, Medical tourism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO report, bloom and medical costs allotment was about 6 % of Iran's Gross Domes-tic Artefact in 2011. Bloom centers are adverse a approaching in which costs will be advised as the aboriginal issuef. Hospitals are the a lot of important units that action medical and bloom affliction services, which agency authoritative new hospitals will advance to advance of health, Prevention of diseases and admission to analysis and rehabilitation services. On the added hand, due to development of adult technology and accessories and the use of broadly altered specialties, architecture new hospitals would be actual costly. According to WHO's report, hospital costs cover about one bisected of all bloom costs in the third apple countries. Hospitals allotment in authoritative accepted costs in bloom area is amid 60-80 % . Increasing burden on accessible banking re-sources of bloom affliction units distinctively hospitals increases the call of allegory altered economical strategies.

Health affliction industry is witnessing a common antagonism as well. Today, the amount of patients travelling from developed countries to developing countries gluttonous medical affliction is in-creasing. These patients are not rich, but they appeal medical affliction of top superior and low cost.

Estimations are altered so that McKinsey estimates the Acquirement from medical tourism in 2012 will ability 100 billion dollars. Based on WHO statistics, 50 billion dollars are spent for analysis in America and European countries every year, which could accept an absorbing appulse on Medical tourism abridgement of Asian countries. Mean-while in 2004, 11000 patients from added countries were accepted to Iran's hospitals and these statistics were aloft to 17500 in 2005. One of the means to allure medical tourists and abstain crumbling banking assets is application the elements of the business mix so they could accomplish the best use of these assets and accomplish income. The abstraction of the business mix was explained in 1964 by Borden; he took his abstraction from Kalitoun, who authentic business administrator as accommodation maker and an artisan accumulation elements of 4. Business is neither a science nor an art; business is the action for identifying, apprehension and bartering customer's needs in a profiting manner, which follows the addiction of the customers. Business is the abstraction of a Set of controllable variables accessible to business administration which could be acclimated to access the customers. Elements of business mix are a set of acquiescent equipments and elements that organizations and companies anatomy their business action by accumulation them . Darling and Lipson disconnected these mix variables in to 4 levels: artefact mix, auction mix, advice mix and advance mix. Bulte and Waterschoot authentic the mix, a aggregate of advantageous elements to acknowledge to bazaar and called product, price, advance and advice as Mix variables. Bulte and Waterschoot and McCarthy disconnected elements of business mix in to 4 accommodation authoritative variables of Product, Price, Artefact Progression and Advance channels Progression (4P). Therefore if artefact business strategies are discussed, business usually considers the four capital factors of: product, price, abode and advertisement, but the amount of casework that includes Customer accord in the assembly and the accent of time, requires actuality of added analytical factors. To ability this challenge, chip administration archetypal of account is acclimated which draws the absorption of account organizations managers to 8 accommodation authoritative variables. Lovelock and Wright allegorize anniversary of these 8 P's to paddles of a rowboat which moves with the advice of 8 rowers. McCarthy declared in 1971 that creating business mix is an basic allotment in the alternative of the ambition bazaar and all these fac-tors should be acclimated in the aforementioned time For the Co-ordination of business action so it could be successful.

Many advisers accept bidding in their studies that the four factors of price, place, artefact and advance are elements of business mix. Bidokhti (2010) has added some factors such as concrete evidence, planning and individuals to these elements.

According to the above, advancing a business mix account for medical affliction seems capital so that admiral would appraise their institutions application this account and abstain a decay of assets and assuredly access the acquirement of the institutions.

Procedure

The present study is cross-sectional and qualitative performed in 2012 to create a checklist for elements of medical care marketing mix. It is a practical study that could be used by policy makers in health sector and university officials.

For this matter, Aspects of the marketing according to the past studies including product, price, place and promotion were chosen as elements of marketing mix. To design the checklist, author used passed studies in the field of marketing. To reach studies performed in Iran author referred to www.SID.ir, www.magiran.com, www.iran-medex.ir, www.irandoc.ac.ir, and for studies in other countries he referred to www.pubmed.com, www.proquest.com, www.sciencedirect.com and www.emeraldinsight.com. After studying various researches, other aspects such as employees, pro-cesses and physical attractiveness were added and Indicators for each aspect were determined. Then the initial checklist was designed with 7 aspects (Mixes) and 70 indicators having 2 ranges of answers: Yes or No. Aspects and indexes were as followed: Product Mix with 11 indicators, Place Mix with 9, Promotion Mix with 12, Price Mix with 9, People Mix with 12, Process Mix with 6 and Physical attraction Mix with 11 indicators. In the next step, for validity check, Delphi's technique was used; thus the checklist was sent to health service management professionals that had studied and researched in medical tourism, or were resident in cities active in the field of tour-ism, 15 of which replied. Their views were summarized and returned to them for the final assessment. This was continued till an agreement was reached by the experts. In the end Physician Mix was added to the aspects and the range of answers was changed to: Yes, No or to some extent.

Results

After applying the opinions of experts, the final checklist contained 8 aspects (Mixes) and 79 indexes: Product mix with 11 indicators, Place Mix with 3, Promotion Mix with 13, Price Mix with 9, People Mix with 12, Process Mix with 6, Physical attraction Mix with 19 and Physician Mix with 6 indicators. (In table 1, aspects and indexes are shown)

Table 1. Health Care Marketing Checklist

Product Mix

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|----|---|
| 1 | At this hospital, Variety of services are offered to the patients |
| 2 | At this hospital, distinctive services in compare to other hospitals are offered. |
| 3 | At this hospital, new services are designed for the patients. |
| 4 | At this hospital, new services are offered. |
| 5 | At this hospital, post discharge services are offered. |
| 6 | At this hospital, services are offered with the quality of higher than expected. |
| 7 | At this hospital, consulting services are offered. |
| 8 | At this hospital, services end in the first visit. |
| 9 | At this hospital, Maximum respond to patient needs are given in the first visit |
| 10 | At this hospital, preventive services are offered. |
| 11 | At this hospital, proper diagnostic services are offered. |

Place Mix

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | This hospital is located near the town. |
| 2 | This hospital is not located in a crowded and noisy place. |
| 3 | This hospital is easily accessible. |

Promotion Mix

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|---|--|
| 1 | This hospital posts brochures and mails to the people. |
| 2 | This hospital has an up dated website. |
| 3 | This hospital uses ceremonies to introduce its capabilities. |

- 4 This hospital offers medical consultation phone services.
- 5 This hospital provides patient experience and feedback of results.
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- 6 This hospital uses information tables in the hospital setting.
- 7 This hospital uses animation for information.
- 8 This hospital uses information banners.
- 9 Representatives of this hospital are present in crowded city health centers and clinics.
- 10 This hospital offers its performance as periodic reports to the public.
- 11 This hospital uses television to advertise and inform people
- 12 This hospital provides poor stratum of society with gifts and privileges.
- 13 This hospital is creative in informing people.

Price Mix

- 1 This hospital has contracts with various basic and supplemental health insurances.
- 2 At this hospital, financial information is presented clearly to the patient.
- 3 At this hospital, bills are presented to the patients in a timely manner.
- 4 At this hospital, discount on fees are offered to the patients.
- 5 At this hospital, at certain seasons of the year special discounts are offered.
- 6 At this hospital, some of the services are free.
- 7 At this hospital, the patient is introduced to relevant department to obtain financial facilities.
- 8 At this hospital, service fees are lower in comparison with other hospitals
- 9 At this hospital, fees are charged based on customer's income

Personnel Mix

- 1 In these hospitals services, there are enough staffs.
- 2 At this hospital, staffs respond to patients questions timely.
- 3 At this hospital, staffs value patients' needs, feelings and emotions.
- 4 At this hospital, staffs train communication skills.
- 5 At this hospital, staffs appearances are uniform.
- 6 At this hospital, staffs have spirit of criticism.
- 7 At this hospital, staffs have the spirit of hospitality.
- 8 At this hospital, staffs treat patients with openness.
- 9 At this hospital, there are staffs with sufficient skills to provide services.
- 10 At this hospital, there are staffs with appropriate knowledge and expertise to provide services.
- 11 At this hospital, managers have communications with patients.
- 12 This hospital's staffs have personal commitments.
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Process Mix

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | At this hospital, promoting systems for service offering processes exist. |
| 2 | This hospital responds to patients complaints. |
| 3 | At this hospital, details of the offered services are explained to the patients. |
| 4 | At this hospital, pamphlets, manuals and signs are used. |
| 5 | At this hospital, patients are asked to vote through phone about the services delivery. |
| 6 | At this hospital, network system and HIS are used. |

Physical Attraction Mix

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|----|---|
| 1 | In this hospital, inner space, wards facades and interior design has taken into consideration. |
| 2 | In this hospital, outer space and facade has taken into consideration. |
| 3 | In this hospital, there are parking lots for personnel and patients. |
| 4 | In this hospital, Admission is possible through phone. |
| 5 | In this hospital, Admission is possible via website. |
| 6 | This hospital has contracts with private facilities in order to complete patients' treatment at home. |
| 7 | In this hospital, patient transportation system in and out of hospital exists. |
| 8 | In this hospital, some ambulatory care is possible without the presence of the patient. |
| 9 | In this hospital, the combination and variety of colors are used. |
| 10 | In this hospital, air conditioning and pleasant smells are used. |
| 11 | In this hospital, recreational and convenient facilities for the patients and their relatives exist. |
| 12 | In this hospital, optional food menu for the patients exist. |
| 13 | In this hospital, an appropriate lighting system is used. |
| 14 | In this hospital, an internal magazine is published. |
| 15 | In the waiting room of the hospital, calm music is played. |
| 16 | In the waiting room of the hospital, TV monitors exist. |
| 17 | In the waiting room of the hospital, updated magazines and newspapers exist. |
| 18 | In this hospital, interurban public phone exists. |
| 19 | In this hospital, public phones to outside urban exist. |

Physician Mix

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|---|--|
| 1 | There are sufficient physicians at this hospital. |
| 2 | At this hospital, physicians deal with patients with openness. |
| 3 | At this hospital, physicians with appropriate skills exist |

- 4 At this hospital, physicians with appropriate knowledge and expertise exist
- 5 At this hospital, famous physicians with good reputations exist.
- 6 At this hospital, physicians have decent appearances and uniforms.

Discussion

Some of the indicators used in Product Mix were continuation of treatment, quality of services and variety of services. It was shown in many studies that Continuation of treatment, quality of services, existence of after sale services, diversified services and development of diversified services packages to attract patients are of importance.

For Place Mix, indicators such as Close distance to the city and easy access to the hospital and etc. were set. Researchers showed that hospital's location and customers' ease of access to services are very important in attracting patients. It is also possible that the Lack of easy access to the service providing center and its long distance, would lead to increased costs and lack of customer incentives.

In Promotion Mix were also several indicators considered: sending letters and brochures to public, having an updated website, medical advice phone services, using animation and banners and etc. Tabibi and etc. has expressed in his study in 2011 that advertisement is considered of great importance in attracting patients. Another author showed that posters at the entrance and exit doors can be helpful in attracting patients.

Afshani showed in his studies that one of the major weaknesses of Iran's medical tourism industry is the lack of proper and professional information system, specially existing gaps in public relations electronics in Iran's hospitals, that leads to lack of awareness and willingness of national and inter-national tourists.

In Price Mix, discounts and cheap prices have been mentioned, as Jabbari (2008) has mentioned price as the first motivational factor for most patients. The high cost of medical care in most developed countries have caused people to seek cheaper treatments in other countries which are the less developed countries from an economic perspective. Another study shows that patients seek high quality medical care at affordable prices.

One of the indexes of the Staff and Physicians is their academic qualifications. A study explains that Proper training and qualification of personnel can support the medical care centers in providing appropriate medical services.

One of the indexes of Promotion Mix is patient and his family's awareness of the details of his treatment method. Various studies have emphasized that patient and his family, have the right to be informed of the treatment and care method and participate actively in this process, especially they should be fully aware of different consequences of the treatment.

A study about Physical attraction Mix showed that reasons for the low standard of facilities are items such as old hospital buildings and Lack of staff awareness of hygiene standards in hospitals.

Conclusion

Health institutions, especially hospitals can do a lot more use of this Check List, especially as regards that Iran economy is only dependent on crude oil and to escape of this dependence it should find a solution. These institutions can use this check list for attracting medical tourists and thereby acquire large incomes. Also by using this check List, health institutions and hospitals can recognize their strengths and opportunities as well as the Improvable points in different services' fields like medical tourism and find a remedy for their improvable points for maximum use of their potential.

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