



IST

Fallstudienreihe

Innovation, Servicedienstleistungen und
Technologie

Case Studies on

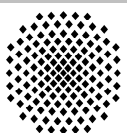
Innovation, Services and Technology

**The hotel industry – creative and full
of new ideas (English version)**

Ute Reuter

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© Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Burr
Betriebswirtschaftliches Institut
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Herausgeber

Wolfgang Burr

Betriebswirtschaftliches Institut der Universität Stuttgart
Lehrstuhl für ABWL, Forschungs-, Entwicklungs- und
Innovationsmanagement

Keplerstrasse 17
70174 Stuttgart

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The hotel industry – creative and full of new ideas

Dipl. Oec. Ute Reuter

Chair of General Business Administration, Research & Development and Innovation Management

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Burr

University of Stuttgart

Keplerstrasse 17, 70174 Stuttgart

<http://www.bwi.uni-stuttgart.de/innovation>

e-mail: ute.reuter@bwi.uni-stuttgart.de

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1 Introduction

„One hotel is much like another”, you might say to yourself before going on a holiday. And “most of the time, you go back to your hotel room only to sleep”. The hotel industry is quite familiar with these very thoughts and - over the past few years - has invested considerable effort to convince people that the opposite is also possible. More and more new hotel concepts are being developed, which render one hotel more extraordinary than the other, and this happens not only abroad, but also in Germany. One example for a creative hotel idea is the tree house hotel located in Görlitz.

2 Case study

In 2005, the tree house hotel in Görlitz opened as the first tree house hotel in Germany.¹ Jürgen Bergmann, the hotel manager, is certain that an overnight stay in a tree house is a man's lifelong dream. In order for this man's dream to turn out even more adventurous, the toilets in the tree houses are real hole-in-the-ground latrines, and the outdoor shower sprinkles only ice cold water down on the person showering.² Each and every one of the eight tree houses carries its own fancy name, such as Olves Baumburg (Olves tree castle), Thor Alfsons Astpalast (Thor Alfsons tree branch palace) and Fionas Luftschloss (Fionas castle in the air). The individual tree houses are connected via plank bridges with a celebration platform in the middle of the hotel. As a special attraction, a mystery tale is told about the tree house hotel. The beginning of this tale can be found on the homepage of the tree house hotel and every guest can find out the sequel during an overnight stay. However, the adventure in lofty heights has its price: one night's accommodation including breakfast costs approximately 200 to 300 Euros.³ Adjoining the tree house hotel there is the „green annulated adventure and amusement park“ of Einsiedel cultural island with a generous playing landscape, theater performances in a rebuilt barn, an organized

¹ N.N. (2011e), for URL see bibliography

² Cf. Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

³ Cf. N.N. (2011a), for URL see bibliography

treasure hunt and many other activities.⁴ This way, nature, art and culture are brought in line.⁵ Among other things, this was one reason why the tree house hotel in Görlitz was awarded the special prize for creativity at the Deutscher Tourismstag 2010 (German Tourism Day 2010).⁶

Fig. 1: The tree house hotel in Görlitz (Germany)



Source: Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

The tree house hotel in Görlitz has also faced competition in recent years: In 2008, another tree house hotel was opened in Solling⁷ and, in early May 2011, the rural district office (Landratsamt) in Böblingen has approved the application for a construction permit of another new tree house hotel.⁸ Now, the local architectural firm which applied for the construction permit, can start the implementation of the planned tree house hotel.⁹

Abroad, the tree house hotel concept has been in existence for a long time. There are tree house hotels both in the jungles of South America, Africa, Australia, Canada, and even near the Polar Circle.¹⁰ Particularly unusual examples are the Free Spirit Spheres in Canada (see Figure 2, left), which float - suspended on ropes - between trees on Vancouver Island, the airplane in

⁴ Cf. N.N. (2011d), for URL see bibliography

⁵ Cf. Ege (2011), for URL see bibliography

⁶ Cf. Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

⁷ Cf. N.N. (2011b), for URL see bibliography, N.N. (2011e), for URL see bibliography

⁸ Cf. N.N. (2011c), p. 9

⁹ Cf. Rural district office (Landratsamt) in Böblingen (2011)

¹⁰ Cf. Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

Costa Rica which seemingly made an emergency landing in a tree and can now be used for an overnight stay in the jungle (see Figure 2, center), and the mirrored cube “Mirrorcube” in Sweden (see Figure 2, right), which is barely visible between the trees.

Figure 2: Extravagant tree houses all over the world



Source: Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

Sustainability and protection of nature are important factors when building a tree house hotel. The Swedish Lindvall family who owns the „Mirrorcube“ as well as two other tree houses, for example, was especially careful to ensure that none of the surrounding trees were damaged when the tree houses were built.¹¹

3 Assignment of tasks for diploma students

Ever since you were a child, you have been dreaming about staying in a tree house over the weekend, and this makes you a potential customer for the tree house hotels described. However, the tree house hotel concept in Görlitz does not fully convince you yet. You would like to join the process of service development for the tree house hotel in Weil im Schönbuch, in order to make this tree house hotel even more attractive for potential customers.

3.1 Customer integration

From your studies, you still remember the customer segmentation model of Kunz and Mangold (2004). Briefly outline the model in theory. In doing so, please also focus on the degree of integration of each specific customer integration instruments. With reference to the case study, please explain to the head of the planning architectural agency, which customer integration

¹¹ Cf. Kreller (2010), for URL see bibliography

instruments you consider meaningful for this specific case and which you do not. Please justify your answer accordingly.

3.2 Creativity techniques

Within the scope of idea generation, the planning architect considers it useful to support a workshop with different potential customers by using creativity techniques. He kindly asks you for help in planning the workshop. At first, please list which creativity techniques there are in theory. Then start thinking about which creativity technique can be used to support such a workshop and opt for the use of one creativity technique. Based on the case study, please justify your decision in detail with, for example, the aid of the hypotheses for the use of creativity techniques.

3.3 Service development process

Consider one specific service which could have been developed during the above-mentioned workshop, and with which you could make the stay of potential customers in the tree house hotel even more attractive. To do so, please briefly outline the whole service development process in theory first. In the next step, explain the service engineering in the narrow sense of your chosen service innovation in detail. In this regard, please consider carefully which customer group you wish to address and please consistently focus on the needs of this customer group.

4 Assignment of tasks for bachelor students

Ever since you were a child, you have been dreaming about staying in a tree house over the weekend, and this makes you a potential customer for the tree house hotels described. However, the tree house hotel concept in Görlitz does not fully convince you yet. You would like to join the process of service development for the tree house hotel in Weil im Schönbuch, and to make this tree house hotel even more attractive for potential customers.

4.1 Customer integration

From your studies, you still remember the customer segmentation model of Kunz and Mangold (2004). Briefly outline the model in theory. In doing so, please also focus on the degree of integration of each specific customer integration instrument. Please choose an instrument, which you consider suitable and usable for this specific case. With reference to the case study, please explain to the head of the planning architectural agency, how this instrument can be used. Please justify your answer accordingly.

4.2 Creativity techniques

Within the scope of idea generation, the planning architect intends to hold a workshop with different potential customers. This workshop should be carried out by using creativity techniques. The planning architect kindly asks you for support in setting up the workshop. Start thinking about which creativity technique can be used to support such a workshop and opt for the use of one creativity technique. Briefly describe the creativity technique chosen by you in theory. With reference to the case study, please justify your answer accordingly with, for example, the aid of the hypotheses for the use of creativity techniques. Then explain in detail, how the chosen creativity technique can be used in this particular case.

4.3 Service engineering

Consider one specific innovative service which could have been the result of the above-mentioned workshop, and with which you could make the stay of potential customers in the tree house hotel even more attractive. To do this, please briefly outline the steps of service engineering in the narrow sense in theory first. With respect to the innovative service conceived by you, please explain one of the phases of service engineering in the narrow sense more specifically and in detail. In this regard, please consider carefully which customer group you wish to address and in your deliberations please consistently focus on the needs of this customer group.

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