



Understanding Customer Experience in Running Events: The Application of the Method “Customer Experience Modeling

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of running event participants throughout their customer journey and to discover the critical factors that influence their experiences. This knowledge would enable running event organizers to understand how they can positively impact runners' experiences. To achieve the research objectives, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the marathon runners. The interview data were analyzed and used in the method "Consumer Experience Modeling" of service design science. The findings of the research revealed that runners' overall experiences encompass not only the services provided by running event organizers, but also services supplied by other providers. The service offerings and their respective characteristics

that affected runners' experience consisted of constant accessibility (24/7) and reliable information throughout their participation, injury-free preparation, and acquisition of footwear, clothing, and supplements that are safe, secure, and aimed at optimizing their performance. Additionally, the services included organized travel activities, secure and comfortable accommodation at the running event location, guidance, and organization at the starting and finishing points, a risk-free racecourse to avoid accidents, options for safety and reliability in catering to prevent dehydration or abandonment, and organization and safety during the post-race excursion. Finally, the means considered indispensable to the runner's experience were the internet, smart phones, smart phone applications (apps), IT systems, health professionals, and coaches. The theoretical and practical contributions will be discussed.

Keywords: customer experience, service design, qualitative research

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