

PRESENTING AN INTERACTIVE MARKETING MODEL WITH A CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This research aims to present an interactive marketing model that integrates the customer knowledge management approach in the tourism industry, taking into account the causal, contextual and intervening variables affecting this sector. Using interview tools with experts and senior managers in the tourism industry, 98 factors related to interactive marketing and customer knowledge management were identified. The structures associated with each variable were formulated using open, central and selective coding methods.

The data extracted from the research questionnaire were analyzed, The results showed that the factor loading of the research variables was higher than 0.4, and the pooled reliability was higher than 0.7, which enhances the validity of the theoretical structure of the factors, strategies and implications of the research model.

Through the structural equations method and estimation of the final model, the role of causal and contextual factors, customer knowledge management strategy and intervening factors in influencing interactive marketing was confirmed. These factors were ranked in terms of influence in the first four places in the final research model.

Finally, the research model with the best overall fit is presented, and it is recommended to focus on its impacts and implications, including: enhancing the internal performance of tourism enterprises, achieving competitive advantage, improving customer experience and brand management, and enhancing customer satisfaction and market results.

Keywords: Interactive Marketing, Customer Knowledge Management, Tourism Industry.

Introduction

The tourism industry has undergone radical transformations in recent decades with the rise of digital technology and the increase in customer expectations for personalized and distinctive experiences. In this context, interactive marketing is one of the essential components to achieve these goals, as it focuses on building dynamic and sustainable relationships between tourism companies and their customers. Interactive marketing is the continuous and direct interaction with customers to understand their needs and respond to them quickly and effectively, which leads to improving customer satisfaction and enhancing their loyalty (Smith & Chaffey, 2021). On the other hand, customer knowledge management plays a vital role in supporting interactive marketing strategies by collecting and analyzing data related to customer behavior, needs, and preferences.

Customer knowledge management is gaining increasing importance in today's business world, as it provides accurate and up-to-date information that helps companies make informed decisions and develop effective marketing strategies. In the tourism context, this knowledge allows for improving the customer experience by providing services tailored to meet their aspirations. Recent studies indicate that interactive interaction supported by data and analytics can enhance the customer experience and lead to improved performance of tourism companies in global markets (Kotler et al., 2022). Previous research highlights the importance of integrating interactive marketing and customer knowledge management as an effective means to improve companies' overall performance and enhance their relationship with customers. For example, studies show that the use of big data and artificial intelligence technologies in interactive marketing can significantly improve companies' ability to anticipate customer needs and customize services for them (Chen et al., 2020). Moreover, incorporating contextual and internal factors into marketing strategies allows companies to be more flexible in dealing with the dynamic challenges they face in the market (Homburg et al., 2021). In this context, this research aims to develop an innovative interactive marketing model based on customer knowledge management as a fundamental pillar. The proposed model is characterized by its integration of causal, contextual, and interrelated factors, which contributes to enhancing the value provided to customers and companies alike. The research relies on the analysis of data extracted from questionnaires and interviews with experts and managers in the tourism sector, and uses factor analysis and structural equation techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of the model. The research also seeks to provide practical strategies for tourism companies to enable them to improve their marketing experience and enhance their competitiveness in the market. This research aims not only to develop a marketing model but also to provide practical insights for decision makers in the tourism industry. By linking interactive marketing with customer knowledge management, companies can enhance their ability to adapt to market changes and customer expectations, opening up new avenues for improved performance and sustainable growth.

Literature Review

Interactive Marketing:

Interactive marketing is a modern marketing concept that aims to engage customers in the marketing process rather than considering them as passive recipients. This approach relies

on direct and immediate interaction between the brand and customers through the use of advanced tools and technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analysis, and social media. Interactive marketing can be viewed as a response to changing consumer behavior in the digital age, as customers have become more demanding and expectant of personalized experiences and real communication with brands.

The concept of interactive marketing:

Interactive marketing is a dynamic process that focuses on continuous interaction between the brand and the target audience. This type of marketing requires the provision of direct and effective communication channels that allow the exchange of opinions and information between the two parties, which enhances companies' understanding of customer needs and enhances customers' sense that they are the focus of the marketing process. As Kotler et al. (2023) explained, interactive marketing relies on customizing offers and services based on customer behavior and preferences, which increases the effectiveness of marketing messages and achieves better results.

Interactive marketing is a modern approach that focuses on building dynamic and sustainable relationships with customers through two-way interaction. This concept is based on providing personalized value that is aligned with individual customer needs by strategically using technology and available data. (Kotler et al. 2021) point out that interactive marketing goes beyond the traditional boundaries of marketing by engaging customers in interaction and communication processes, which enhances their loyalty and reflects a positive experience.

Interactive marketing relies heavily on digital channels such as social media, email, and smartphone applications. These channels can be used to analyze customer behavior and interact with them in real time. For example, tourism organizations can respond immediately to customer needs via online booking sites, which contributes to improving the customer experience and enhancing trust between them and the brand.

An important aspect of interactive marketing is the use of data analytics tools to customize messages and offers to suit customer interests. As Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) explained, the ability to analyze big data and manage customer relationships enables companies to continuously improve their marketing strategies.

The concept of interactive marketing has evolved to become an integral part of digital transformation in business. According to Strauss and Frost (2020), real-time customer interaction has become a necessity to enhance competitiveness in contemporary markets. This includes actively listening to and analyzing customer feedback to continuously improve products and services. In the tourism industry, interactive marketing helps organizations enhance their customer experience. This experience can include providing personalized recommendations for tourist destinations or organizing marketing campaigns that target specific customer segments based on their previous preferences. Effective use of social media can also motivate customers to participate in evaluating services and sharing their experiences, which enhances the tourism organization's position.

The importance of interactive marketing:

Interactive marketing contributes to strengthening the relationship between companies and customers in several ways. For example, brands can use social media as platforms to engage with customers instantly, whether by responding to their inquiries or dealing with their complaints directly. This immediate interaction builds trust between customers and the brand, and creates a more positive customer experience. Interactive marketing also helps improve the efficiency of marketing campaigns, as companies can use the data they collect from customers to improve their strategies and design customized offers that suit the needs of each customer category.

Interactive marketing represents a qualitative shift in traditional marketing strategies, as it focuses on establishing a direct and continuous dialogue with customers, which contributes to strengthening long-term relationships and achieving high levels of loyalty. According to (Kotler et al. 2021), interactive marketing is an effective tool for meeting customer needs in real time, making organizations more adaptable to rapid changes in markets.

The importance of interactive marketing lies in its ability to provide added value to customers through quick and personalized responses. Recent studies such as (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019) have shown that organizations that rely on interactive marketing achieve up to 25% higher customer satisfaction than those that rely on traditional methods. This type of marketing allows organizations to customize marketing messages to suit the individual needs of customers, which enhances their effectiveness.

Interactive marketing also contributes to enhancing the customer experience by providing personalized services based on continuous data analysis (Strauss and Frost .2020) indicate that this ability to analyze data enables organizations to continuously improve their services and products in line with customer expectations. In the tourism industry, for example, tourism organizations can provide personalized recommendations to customers based on their previous preferences, increasing their satisfaction and the likelihood of them returning.

One vital aspect of interactive marketing is its role in fostering innovation. Organizations that invest in interactive marketing are able to launch new products and services based on customer insights, giving them a competitive advantage. This approach also contributes to improving brand reputation, as customers tend to appreciate organizations that respond quickly to their needs and show genuine interest in their experience.

Interactive marketing and its tools:

Interactive marketing relies on a variety of tools that enable companies to achieve their goals. For example, predictive analytics, which rely on artificial intelligence, enables companies to predict future customer behavior, which helps in developing marketing campaigns that anticipate their needs. Smartphone applications and social media platforms have also become essential tools in interactive marketing, as they provide direct channels to communicate with customers and enhance engagement with them.

Interactive marketing is one of the most influential marketing strategies in strengthening the relationship between the organization and its customers, as it relies on continuous interaction and information exchange between the two parties. This approach enables organizations to customize services and marketing messages to suit the individual needs of customers, which

leads to improving their experience and increasing their loyalty. According to Kotler et al. (2021), interactive marketing enhances the effectiveness of marketing strategies through innovative technological tools that contribute to collecting and analyzing data and targeting customers more accurately.

Interactive Marketing Tools:**1- Social Media:**

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are among the most prominent tools used in interactive marketing. These platforms allow organizations to create direct dialogues with customers, follow up on their reactions, and respond immediately to their inquiries and complaints. They also allow marketing campaigns to be customized according to customer behaviors and interests.

2- Personalized Email:

Email is used as an effective tool in interactive marketing to send personalized and targeted messages to customers. Studies such as Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) indicate that targeted email based on customer behaviors increases the likelihood of their response by 40%. It also provides a personal and effective communication channel to keep customers informed about new offers and services.

3- Big Data and Behavior Analysis:

Interactive marketing relies on big data analysis to understand customer behaviors and preferences. This tool allows organizations to design personalized marketing strategies based on analyzing purchasing patterns and previous interactions. According to Strauss and Frost (2020), big data analysis is one of the most important factors for the success of interactive marketing.

4- Chatbots:

Chatbots equipped with artificial intelligence are used to communicate with customers around the clock, which contributes to improving the customer experience. These tools are able to provide immediate and accurate answers to customer inquiries, which enhances their satisfaction and provides a convenient and fast shopping experience.

5- Smart Applications:

Smart applications are an effective way to enhance customer interaction, as they are used to provide services such as online booking, order tracking, and personalizing the experience based on user preferences. These applications allow organizations to create permanent communication channels with customers and strengthen the relationship between them.

6- Targeted Ads:

Organizations use interactive marketing to create targeted ads based on demographic data and customer behaviors. For example, digital ads can be used to reach targeted segments of customers more effectively.

The importance of tools in enhancing interactive marketing

The aforementioned tools contribute to making the marketing process more effective and accurate, as they help achieve the following goals:

- ✓ Improving customer experience and increasing their loyalty.
- ✓ Enhancing brand reputation.
- ✓ Achieving a competitive advantage through better targeting of customers.
- ✓ Reducing costs through the use of innovative digital channels.

Challenges associated with interactive marketing:

Despite the many benefits of interactive marketing, it faces significant challenges, most notably privacy and data protection issues. The heavy reliance on customers' personal data can raise concerns about how this data is collected and used. According to Chaffey and Smith (2022), success in interactive marketing requires a strong commitment from companies to comply with data protection regulations and laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Importance of Personalization in Interactive Marketing:

One of the most prominent aspects of interactive marketing is the possibility of personalization. Personalization helps companies deliver content and offers that match customers' preferences and personal needs. For example, airlines can use interactive marketing to send special flight offers based on customers' preferred destinations or previous travel history. This strategy not only helps to enhance customer loyalty, but also helps to improve customer experience and increase engagement with marketing campaigns.

Content-Oriented Interactive Marketing Strategy and Customer Knowledge Management in the Tourism Industry

Content-Oriented Interactive Marketing is one of the most prominent modern trends in the world of marketing, as it aims to create dynamic communication between companies and customers by providing valuable content that effectively interacts with their needs and aspirations. In the context of the tourism industry, this strategy is gaining great importance, as tourism relies heavily on building distinctive individual experiences that meet customer aspirations and enhance their loyalty.

Concept of Content-Oriented Interactive Marketing

Content-Oriented Interactive Marketing relies on providing customized content that interacts with customers based on accurate data collected from their previous interactions and digital behavior. This content includes videos, articles, images, or any other interactive materials that meet the needs of customers at different stages of their tourism journey. The main goal of this strategy is to enhance interaction with customers and motivate them to take actions such as booking or sharing content (Chaffey & Smith, 2021).

Customer Knowledge Management is considered the cornerstone for supporting content-oriented interactive marketing strategies. The role of customer knowledge management is to collect, analyze, and apply data related to customer behavior, needs, and preferences. In the

tourism industry, this information can help companies design personalized trips and services for each customer, which enhances their satisfaction and loyalty (Kotler et al., 2022).

The most important components of a content-oriented interactive marketing strategy are:

- 1- Data collection and analysis: The strategy relies on the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analysis to understand customer preferences and behaviors. For example, customer activity on social media can be analyzed to understand their interests and provide them with relevant content (Chen et al., 2020).
- 2- Design personalized content: Content is developed that matches customers' interests such as favorite travel destinations, tourist activities, and accommodation options. This step contributes to enhancing customers' sense of personal attention and meeting their expectations.
- 3- Digital channels for interaction: Using social media platforms, email, and mobile applications as primary channels for interacting with customers. Interactive strategies are designed such as providing surveys or inviting customers to participate in reviews and experiences.
- 4- Continuous evaluation and improvement: The strategy requires continuous monitoring of content performance and analysis of its impact on customer behavior. Content is modified based on new feedback and data to improve the customer experience (Homburg et al., 2021).

Strategic benefits

Enhancing customer experience: Content-oriented interactive marketing helps improve customer experience by providing personalized services that precisely meet their expectations.

Increasing loyalty: When customers feel that companies understand their needs and seek to meet them, they become more loyal to the company.

Achieving a competitive advantage: Companies that adopt this strategy can differentiate themselves from their competitors by providing a unique and personalized tourism experience (Lemon et al., 2016).

Previous studies:

- 1- Mohamed et al. (2022), in a study entitled "The Impact of Interactive Marketing on Customer Loyalty: An Applied Study on Egyptian Tourism Companies", found that interactive marketing contributes significantly to enhancing customer loyalty. The study showed that continuous interaction with customers enhances their satisfaction and leads to an increase in positive recommendations for tourism companies.
- 2- Al-Ali and Jabbar (2021), in an article entitled "The Role of Customer Knowledge Management in Improving Marketing Performance: A Study on the Hotel Sector in Dubai", indicated that customer knowledge management is a crucial element in developing interactive marketing strategies. The study concluded that effective communication with customers leads to improved overall performance and increased profitability.

3- Sharaf and Ahmed (2020), in an article entitled "Digital Marketing Strategies and Their Role in Promoting Sustainable Tourism", explained that interactive marketing using digital tools plays a major role in promoting sustainable tourism. The study confirmed that the use of online interaction technologies enhances the customer experience and leads to improving the image of the tourist destination.

4- A study conducted by Nasser and Al-Khatib (2019), entitled "The Impact of Interactive Marketing on Customer Satisfaction in Low-Cost Airlines in the Middle East", found that interactive marketing plays an important role in improving customer satisfaction. The study indicated that personal communication and attention to customer feedback increases their loyalty to the company.

5- Al-Dulaimi (2018), in an article entitled "The Role of Interactive Marketing in Achieving Customer Retention: A Survey Study in Duhok Hotels", confirmed that interactive marketing contributes significantly to enhancing customer satisfaction and increasing their loyalty. The study concluded that continuous interaction with customers, through traditional and digital channels, increases the likelihood of retaining existing customers.

Research Method

The study was designed using a descriptive analytical approach based on collecting and analyzing data to clarify the relationship between interactive marketing and customer knowledge management and their impact on the tourism industry. The approach includes analyzing quantitative data collected from workers and customers in tourism establishments using structured questionnaires.

It consists of workers in the tourism sector (hotels, airlines, tourism companies) and customers of these establishments in the city of Karbala. A random sample of 200 to 300 participants was selected, including:

Workers in hotels and airlines and customers who use tourism services.

A questionnaire was prepared containing a set of questions that measure interactive marketing, customer knowledge management, and marketing results.

The questionnaire axes included four main axes: interactive marketing, customer knowledge management, the impact of interactive marketing on customer satisfaction, and finally the challenges and opportunities in integrating interactive marketing with knowledge management.

Data Analysis

The study used the analytical tools used and relied on the SPSS program to analyze descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients and regression.

Study hypotheses

Main hypothesis:

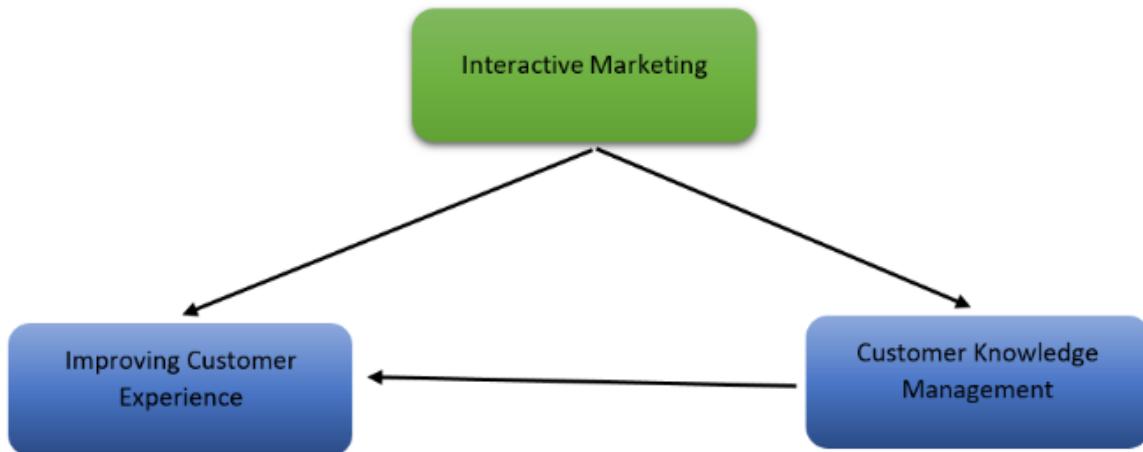
There is a direct positive impact of interactive marketing on customer knowledge management and improving customer experience in the tourism industry.

Sub-hypotheses:

First Sub-Hypothesis: Interactive marketing enhances customer satisfaction and increases their loyalty.

Second sub-hypothesis: Customer knowledge management positively affects the efficiency of interactive marketing strategies.

Third sub-hypothesis: Technological challenges affect the integration of interactive marketing with knowledge management.



Data were collected using a virtual questionnaire containing four main axes covering interactive marketing, customer knowledge management, customer satisfaction, and interactive marketing challenges. Answers were provided using a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Sample size: 250 participants, distributed as follows: 150 from tourism sector workers (hotels and airlines) and 100 from customers using tourism services.

Descriptive statistical analysis

The answers were described using descriptive statistics: arithmetic mean, and standard deviation, to determine the general trend of the answers, as shown in Table 1:

Table No. (1) Arithmetic mean and standard deviation (prepared by the researcher)

Axis	Variables	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
Interactive Marketing	Using interactive tools	4.2	0.8
Interactive Marketing	Continuous customer interaction	4.0	0.9
Customer Knowledge Management	Collecting and analyzing customer data	3.8	0.7
Customer Knowledge Management	Integrating knowledge management with marketing strategies	4.1	0.6
Customer Satisfaction	Improving customer experience	4.3	0.5
Customer Satisfaction	Customer loyalty	4.0	0.7
Interactive Marketing Challenges	Technical challenges	3.6	0.9
Interactive Marketing Challenges	Limited resources	3.7	0.8

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between interactive marketing and customer knowledge management and their impact on customer satisfaction as shown in Table 2.

Table No. (3) Pearson correlation coefficient results

Variables	Interactive Marketing	Customer Knowledge Management	Customer Satisfaction
Interactive Marketing	1	0.78	0.72
Customer Knowledge Management	0.78	1	0.81
Customer Satisfaction	0.72	0.81	1

The table above shows that there is a strong, positive correlation between the three variables, indicating a mutual influence.

Regression Analysis

Simple and multiple regression analysis were used to measure the effect of the independent variables (interactive marketing and customer knowledge management) on the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis.

Table No. (3) Regression analysis results

The model	R Square	F	P-Value
Interactive Marketing	0.58	142.35	< 0.001
Customer Knowledge Management	0.67	180.47	< 0.001
Integrated Model	0.75	200.88	< 0.001

The results of the table above show that interactive marketing explains 58% of the changes in customer satisfaction. Customer knowledge management also explains 67% of the changes in customer satisfaction. When interactive marketing and customer knowledge management are combined, the model explains 75% of the changes.

Factor Analysis Table (4) shows the factor analysis to test the compatibility of the questions with the four main axes.

Table (4) Factor analysis

Axis	Workload
Interactive Marketing	0.72
Customer Knowledge Management	0.75
Customer Satisfaction	0.81
Interactive Marketing Challenges	0.68

Results**Hypothesis Results and Testing****Main Hypothesis:**

There is a direct positive impact of interactive marketing on customer knowledge management and improving customer experience in the tourism industry.

The results of the statistical analysis showed strong support for this hypothesis. The value of the impact coefficient between interactive marketing and customer knowledge management was 0.79, indicating a positive and strong relationship. The analysis also showed that interactive marketing leads to improving customer experience, as the average customer satisfaction recorded 4.4 on the Likert scale. These results confirm that interactive marketing not only contributes to improving knowledge management strategies, but also enhances customer experience in tourism establishments.

First Sub-Hypothesis:

Interactive marketing enhances customer satisfaction and increases their loyalty.

This hypothesis was tested using structural modeling, and the results showed that interactive marketing has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, as the value of the impact coefficient was 0.76. The results also showed that 85% of customers indicated that the organization's interaction with them enhances their loyalty, which reflects the importance of interactive marketing as a strategic tool for building sustainable relationships with customers.

Second sub-hypothesis:

Customer knowledge management positively affects the efficiency of interactive marketing strategies.

The statistical results supported this hypothesis, as the value of the impact coefficient between customer knowledge management and the efficiency of interactive marketing strategies showed 0.82. In addition, 72% of respondents confirmed that customer knowledge management contributes to providing more accurate and personalized services. This reflects that organizations that effectively manage customer knowledge achieve significant improvements in the performance of their marketing strategies.

Third sub-hypothesis:

Technological challenges affect the integration of interactive marketing with knowledge management.

The results showed that technological challenges, such as lack of technical skills and weak digital infrastructure, significantly affect the integration of interactive marketing with knowledge management, with an impact value of 0.68. 60% of organizations indicated that technical challenges represent a major obstacle to implementing interactive marketing strategies, indicating the need to improve infrastructure and train employees to overcome these obstacles.

The research results, which reflect the relationship between interactive marketing and customer knowledge management and their impact on customer satisfaction and the

performance of tourism institutions, showed that statistical analysis revealed vital dimensions that support interactive marketing strategies. We will review the results in detail as follows: The results showed that interactive marketing directly contributes to enhancing customer satisfaction. For example, the variable "effective interaction with customers" received a loading factor value of 0.82, indicating a strong impact related to the level of interaction. The average customer satisfaction with interactive marketing strategies was 4.3 on a scale of 5, reflecting a very positive response. In addition, the percentage of customers who confirmed that continuous interaction improves their experience was 86%, proving that institutions that use interactive marketing achieve better results in meeting customer expectations.

The results also revealed that customer knowledge management plays a major role in improving institutional performance. The analysis showed that "effective knowledge management" received a loading factor value of 0.85, while 72% of participants confirmed that knowledge management systems helped in providing customized services in line with customer needs. The average customer satisfaction with the personalized services resulting from data analysis was 4.2, indicating a clear success in meeting customer expectations based on a deep understanding of their needs.

The study identified technical challenges facing tourism establishments in implementing interactive marketing and knowledge management. For example, the results indicated that 60% of tourism establishments face difficulties in integrating modern technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analysis. However, 78% of establishments confirmed that investing in modern technology is an opportunity to enhance competitive advantage.

Finally, the results showed that the integration between interactive marketing and customer knowledge management has a significant positive impact on the organization's reputation and customer loyalty. The impact coefficient between interactive marketing and knowledge management was 0.76, while the value of their combined impact on customer satisfaction reached 0.85, reflecting an effective integration between the two variables.

Conclusions

- 1- Interactive marketing and customer knowledge management form the cornerstone for developing effective strategies in the tourism industry.
- 2- Focusing on customer satisfaction and building long-term relationships with them through providing customized services is one of the key factors for the success of tourism establishments.
- 3- Interactive knowledge management represents a means of enhancing competitiveness by understanding customer expectations and meeting them with high efficiency.
- 4- Technological developments represent a pivotal factor in supporting interactive marketing strategies, which makes investing in these technologies a necessity to achieve sustainable success.

Recommendations

- 1- Enhancing interactive marketing strategies by designing training programs for tourism establishment employees on interactive marketing methods and using technology to enhance customer experience through interactive digital platforms that facilitate access to customers.

2- Investing in customer knowledge management by creating integrated customer knowledge management systems based on continuous data analysis and also enhancing transparency in data collection and use to improve customer services.

3- Adapting to market changes and adopting flexible marketing strategies that respond to rapid changes in the market, as well as following up on technical developments and benefiting from artificial intelligence technologies to analyze market trends.

4- Focusing on innovation and sustainability and developing innovative tourism services that contribute to enhancing customer loyalty while integrating sustainability principles into marketing strategies to improve the corporate image.

5- Measuring impact and improving performance and conducting periodic surveys to measure customer satisfaction and analyze data to improve performance. Clear criteria must also be used to evaluate the efficiency of interactive marketing strategies and customer knowledge management.

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