

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

As a famous place for vacation, a lot of tourists visit Bali. Hotels as accommodation tools hold a very important role for tourism in Bali. Since the competition between hotels is tight, service is very crucial in hotel business. Nowadays, customers are not only aware of facilities but also of the services a hotel can provide. They make comparisons between the features of different hotel products and services. Smart customers also look around for competitive price and service. This fact explains that it is essential for the hotel to maximize the hotel service in order to get customers' attention so that the hotel product can be sold. For reaching this goal, most hotels rely heavily on their front officers, as they are the ones who have direct contact with customers.

Hotel business cannot be separated from travel and tourism. Most tourists come to Bali looking for convenient accommodation, especially those which offers easy access to tourism destinations. The front officers as the one who have direct contact with the customer should be able to offer more than the hotel facilities itself. Bardi says that the front office is often

seen as an information source and a request center for guests (363). Thus, besides giving information about the hotel product, the front officers are expected to be able to tell more about some information related to the travel and tourism, such as the best place to see traditional dance, the most reliable domestic tour, the nearest bank, the cheapest gift shop, and so on.

When customers come to the hotel, their first contact will be with the front officers. When they ask for information about the hotel, it is the time for the front officers to get their attention by doing personal selling. Semenik states that personal selling involves transferring product knowledge about product characteristics and applications, product choice criteria, and corporate support activities to potential customers (486). Specifically, the product knowledge required of the front officers of a hotel is the knowledge about the hotel rates, services and facilities, and the knowledge about travel and tourism as well. By having such knowledge, front officers are able to provide accurate information to potential customers.

In order to deliver product knowledge to potential customers, an often-implemented strategy according to Semenik is attention-interest-desire-action (AIDA) (489). In buying a product, customers should first have attention at the product that they are going to buy. After they get the attention, they will have an interest to know further about the product. If they are interested, they will have the desire to buy the product. Those steps lead to the last step – action – that is when customers take an action

to buy the product. This AIDA concept goes well if front officers, as the seller, have good product knowledge to convince costumers to buy their product.

However, based on the observation during my internship at Rosani Hotel in Kuta-Bali, I see a problem that not all front officers have good product knowledge related to travel and tourism. Most of the customers who come to the hotel are walk-in guests and they need extra guidance for finding other information beside the hotel facilities. Therefore, it is very essential for the front officers to be the ones who attract the customers by providing the requested information. The front officers at Rosani Hotel are equipped with the knowledge of hotel facilities; however, their knowledge about travel and tourism are not equal. This case is very crucial since Bali has a lot of attractive tourist destinations. For instance, when a customer asks one front officer where the nearest gift shop is, and the front officer does not know, the customer will not have the desire to know further about the product because his or her need is not fulfilled; as the result, it will be difficult for the hotel to sell the product. On the other side, when a customer asks other knowledgeable front officer the same question and the front officer can explain well, the customer will have attention because his or her need is fulfilled and the customer will take further action because of it.

Due to this fact, I truly agree that a front officer's product knowledge holds important role in stimulating customer's desire to buy a product so that the sale can increase. Moreover, I am interested in analyzing the

causes and effects of the problem and I propose to do a study on this problem so that the best solution can be found.

B. Identification of the Problem

1. Why do not the front officers in Rosani Hotel have equal product knowledge related to travel and tourism?
2. How can the hotel distribute equal knowledge to the front officers?

C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

The objectives of this study are to find out the causes and effects of the front officers in Rosani Hotel not having equal product knowledge related to travel and tourism and how to distribute equal product knowledge effectively to stimulate AIDA.

The benefits of this study for the institution are to know how to enhance professionalism and excellence of the front officers in fulfilling customers' needs concerning the product knowledge in order to stimulate AIDA and to increase the sale through it. The benefit of this study both for me as the writer and for readers is to understand more about the importance of product knowledge in relation with AIDA.

D. Description of the Institution

Rosani Hotel is a three star hotel. It was established on February 1st 1997 with the motto "Safe and Fun with us". Currently, the hotel is lead by Mr. Agung Wiryawan as the General Manager who is in charge of three

department heads: the Personnel Manager, Marketing Manager and Chief Accounting. Those three department heads are in charge of seven departments, House Keeping, Front Office, Maintenance & Engineering, Food and Beverage Product, Food and Beverage Service, Security and Accounting. Rosani Hotel provides a lot of facilities such as a restaurant, bar and room service, a swimming pool, safety deposit boxes, shuttle service, a money exchange, a drug store, parking area and traditional massage.

Rosani Hotel has thirty-six rooms with three different types of rooms, which are Standard, Superior and Suite Room. Rosani Hotel is very suitable for people of different levels of society. Rosani Hotel offers fifty percent discount during low season. Most Rosani Hotel's customers are walk-in guests; however, the hotel also cooperates with many tour agencies in having customers. During low season, the hotel is up to seventy percent full. However, during the high season, the hotel is always fully-booked.

E. Limitation and Method of the Study

The subject that I would like to focus is the ways to distribute equal product knowledge to the front officers so that they can stimulate customers' AIDA. The front officers, which will be the object of the study, are the front officers at Rosani Hotel, Kuta-Bali.

The method of the study that I use in gathering the data for this study is library research by using text books, electronic sources and my internship

journal.

F. Organization of the Term Paper

This term paper begins with the Abstract, which is, a brief summary of the entire paper in Indonesian. The Abstract is followed by the Declaration of Originality, in which I declare that this term paper contains no part of other people's works except those mentioned in the quotations as following an academic writing ethics. The Declaration of Originality is followed by the Acknowledgements, in which I acknowledge those who are contributed in the writing of this term paper. After that is the Table of Contents, followed by the four chapters:

Chapter I consists of the background of the study, identification of the problem, objectives and benefits of the study, description of the institution, limitation and method of the study and the organization of the term paper

Chapter II consists of the analysis of the problem; the causes and effects from the problem

Chapter III consists of the potential solutions together with their potential positive and negative effects

Chapter IV consists of the conclusion, which is the best solution of the problem

At the end of this term paper, there is a bibliography, which consists of the information of quotations.