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AMARI
Hotels and Resorts

***Creating marketing strategies
for wedding business unit of
Amari Atrium Hotel***



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Abstract

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Title: Creating marketing strategies for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel

Problem: What should be marketing strategies for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel?

Purpose: The aim of our thesis is to analyze the wedding market in Bangkok together with consumer purchasing behavior of Thai's couple regarding to wedding ceremony in order to create the marketing strategies towards marketing mix (7Ps) for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel.

Method: This thesis will be mainly focused on the information gathering from the primary data by conducting interviews and questionnaires distribution to gain the insight and in-dept information for this market and very useful for the target audience. Moreover, the researchers realized that the secondary data can give us the general overview for this market. The theoretical framework is based on "*Marketing Plan for Service Business*" book by Malcolm McDonald. This framework illustrated the outline of marketing planning process for service organizations which consisted of four phases: establishing the strategic context; conducting the situation review; formulating marketing objectives and strategies; allocating budgets and devising a detailed first-year implementation plan. However, the phase of formulating marketing objectives and strategies will be focused.

Conclusion and Recommendation: As the rapid growth of wedding market in Thailand, many companies would like to take the opportunity to gain the market value. Amari Atrium Hotel is known as the wedding venue provider also would like to be in this market that comes with the new form, providing full wedding service or one stop service. In order to compete with the existing rivalries, the hotel should have sustained marketing objective and strategies toward their target customers. Since the full wedding service is considered as the services development for Amari Atrium Hotel; therefore, the marketing objective is to promote one stop service about value added and benefit of this new service to target audience in order to increase sales volume by 10 percent in one year. Moreover the created marketing strategies are compatible with this marketing objective in order to archive the objective. The specific approach for marketing strategy in each element of the marketing mix will be explained in the recommendation part.

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1. Introduction

1.1 General information - Wedding business in Thailand

In Thailand, with the social reasons, the Thai traditional of wedding is essential in order to pay respect not only for the bride and groom, but also for their families as well. To follow this social practice, parents of the bride and groom must be acknowledged. Though, the wedding ceremony is the important part for the marriage in Thailand. (Thai folk, 2000) Nowadays, the wedding ceremony in Thailand is not just traditional that involve with only the members of two families of the couple, but the ceremony also involves a lot more people to be the guest than before. Since Thai people give more priority to the wedding ceremony to meet the social practice. The consumer in this business which is the couple planning to marry has more complicated and sophisticated needs for their wedding ceremony such as a fantastic wedding picture, special wedding places and a fabulous invitation card. (Weddingsquare, 2007) For this reason comprise of the increasing of GDP in Thailand after economic crisis, the various kind of wedding business such as wedding studio and wedding organizer arise and growth continuously since today. (NSO, 2006) From the booming period of this business, it makes the value of business is more interest than previous. It is not just creating a new type of business to the market. but consequently it also stimulate sales volume in other related business such as traveling that the couple use to end up their ceremony with the honeymoon travel.

According to the statistic report about wedding market in Thailand, the total value of this market increase from 3,000 million baht in 2006 to 5,000 million baht in 2007. (Bangkokbizweek, 2007) Moreover, from Thailand national statistic office, the statistic of wedding couple in 2007 show that there are 150,000 couples from 400,000 couples per year arrange wedding ceremony while taking other related services in wedding market. (Bangkokbizweek, 2007) However, even this market flourish with huge value of income, but there are a lot of players still exists that make this market crowded with fierce competition.

What is a *full wedding service*? It is a service which can divide into three parts. First of all, a service provided to help the couple to plan their wedding ceremony in term of concept, theme, decoration, invitation card, souvenir, catering, slogan, or even the image for bride and groom. Second part is coordination with the hotel, and staff including make up artist, photographer, video taker, florist, etc. Finally, the last part is making the script and managing the sequence in the ceremony, and the last, the most important, is to solving the problem which may occur right away without prediction. (Wedding Answer, 2008)

1.2 General information – Amari Atrium Hotel

Amari Hotels and Resorts (AHR) is a hotel management company based in Bangkok. The group, was founded in 1965 and is a privately held company. The corporate office located in Bangkok, and there are currently twelve properties in the group in Bangkok with four hotels, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Koh Chang, Samui, Phuket, Krabi and Trang. Amari Hotels and Resorts also manages a nature resort in

Angkhang, in the very north of Thailand, a property in the Loei province, plus two City Lodge properties, the St James Hotel in Bangkok and Nova Platinum Hotel in South Pattaya. (Amari, 2008)

Amari Hotels and Resorts is committed to continuous growth, not only within Thailand, but throughout Asia and to the development of the region as a key global centre for leisure and commerce. The company is dedicated to maintaining its position as a quality hotel operator, employing recognized, international management standards and procedures. (Amari, 2008)

Amari Atrium Hotel, Bangkok is centrally located on New Petchburi Road, the stylish 577 room Amari Atrium Hotel offers many facilities, including a business centre, fully equipped fitness centre and a choice of restaurants together with exceptional service ensuring that every guest has a relaxing and impressive stay. (Amari, 2008)

The hotel was opened in February 1996 with the remarkable features of 12 story atrium which fills the lobby with lights. Amari Atrium Hotel ranks in four stars hotel out of five by Thai Hotels Association which can guarantee the good quality of service and atmosphere. Not only providing room accommodations, but also, the hotel provides the banqueting facilities for team parties, large dinner, company meeting, cocktails, seminar, wedding, etc. (Amari, 2008)

The matter of fact, nowadays, Thailand is still suffering from political and economic instability. A national referendum recently took place and the new constitution was accepted. These factors continue to have a negative impact on the country's reputation overseas. Investor confidence has declined and the attraction of Thailand as a destination for business and leisure travel has diminished. A peaceful and successful conclusion to the challenges facing the country is paramount to achieving a return to growth and prosperity for the hospitality industry (N Wangsoonthorn 2008, pers. comm. 18 April).

Therefore, the hotel business, by focusing only in selling room accommodations is not enough and it tends not to give the high return of profit to the hotel as they expected. However, taking care of, the other business provided in the hotel, banqueting is another better alternative for the hotel to gain back the revenues.

The general business of these two businesses may differ – wedding business and hotel business, but they have the same goals as gaining more profit, serving the customers' need, and providing the best services. However, the researchers realized there is a linkage between these two businesses which is “providing the wedding function.”

Normally, the hotels offer wedding package which included room accommodation (the American breakfast is included), flower decoration, food, drinks (soda and soft drink), backdrop, cake, voucher, ice craving, flower garlands, wedding bouquet, wedding guestbook, photo stand, etc. (Wedding-Thailand, 2007)

Since in Thailand hotel business, there is no one take the step ahead as the first mover in providing “one stop service of wedding function”(make up, photographer, music,

wedding presentation, theme organizer, etc.); though, it is a challenge task for the hotel business to step as a newcomer to be success in this market. The management is confronting with a challenging task to create a new idea of integrating full wedding service to bring a company to create the best performance and compete with the competitors in the same time.

1.3 Problem statement

Once the hotel has taken this full wedding service business into their consideration, to run it efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage over the competitor, the Amari Atrium Hotel (ATH) should create sustain marketing strategies over the additional service. Therefore, the problem statement can be stated as “*What should be marketing strategies for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel?*”

1.4 Purpose

The aim of our thesis is to analyze the wedding market in Bangkok together with consumer purchasing behavior of Thai’s couple regarding to wedding ceremony in order to create the marketing strategies towards marketing mix (7Ps) for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel.

1.5 Target Audience

This thesis is directly related to the management and Sales and Marketing Department of Amari Atrium Hotel for considering the marketing strategy for wedding business which created by analyzing the Bangkok wedding market and study deep inside the customers purchasing behavior.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Marketing planning process for services

Fundamentally, marketing planning is a series of activities which are tackled in a logical sequence in a way that leads to the setting of marketing objectives and the devising of programs to meet them. Thus, the marketing plan becomes a framework for identifying where and why marketing resources are going to be allocated, when they are to come into play and how they are to be integrated in order to make maximum impact. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) The outcome of this process is the strategic marketing plan.

The planning process which follows is one that has been tried and tested at the Cranfield School of Management for the past two decades. The framework provided originates from research carried out by one of the authors, Malcolm McDonald. As mentioned by McDonald, there are four major phases for the marketing planning process as shown in the table 1 below.

Planning phase	Description
Phase One	Establishing the strategic context (Goal setting)
Phase Two	Analysis the current situation
Phase Three	Creating marketing objectives and strategies
Phase Four	Allocating marketing resources and monitoring

Table 1: Marketing planning phase



Figure 1: Malcolm McDonald's marketing planning process

Source: McDonald & Payne, 2006, p.37

In turn, these four phases can be broken down into series of steps, as shown in the figure 1. Moreover, as shown in the figure1, there are ten steps to complete the marketing planning process. However, as this thesis only focus to the outcome of the marketing objectives and strategies. Though, three phases with six steps were adopted from the original of McDonald’s marketing planning process to use in this thesis as shown in the framework below.

Planning process	The output of the marketing planning process	Marketing theory (structure, framework, tool)
Phase 1 Goal setting	Mission statement Corporate objective	
Phase 2 Current situation review	Market overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market structure • Market trends • Current competition 	Market research Market audit
	External environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities/Threats (by product/service and segmentation) 	SWOT Kotler’s Macro environmental view Market research
	Internal factor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths/Weaknesses (by product/service and segmentation) 	SWOT Market research
Phase 3 Creating marketing strategy	Marketing objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic focus • Product/service mix • Product/service development • Product/service deletion • Target customer groups 	Market segmentation Ansoff matrix
	Marketing Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product/service • Price • Place • Promotion • People • Processes • Physical evidence 	Market research Market segmentation Marketing mix for services

Figure2: Marketing planning process toward marketing mix for services

Source: McDonald & Payne, 2006, p.278

Phase I: Establishing the strategic context

The first phase of the marketing planning process involves determining the mission statement and the setting of corporate objectives for the company. These two steps form the strategic context and provide the pivotal link between the corporate plan and the marketing plan. (McDonald & Payne, 2006)

Step 1: Mission

It is important for all companies to have a sense of mission. By encapsulating this into a brief, highly personal and meaningful statement, it gives the various stakeholders in the service organization a clear purpose and sense of direction.

The mission statement is an important device that can provide an understanding for staff working in different parts of the organization, enabling them to pull together and uphold the corporate values and philosophy. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) However, it is essential that the mission statement is communicated clearly to all stakeholders and is perceived to be both relevant and realistic. Unless these requirements are met, the mission statement is unlikely to have any real impact on the organization.

Step 2: Corporate objectives

The purpose of the objectives is for the stakeholders to measure the success of the mission. Seen in this light, the only true objective of a company is what is stated as being the principle purpose for its existence. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) In most commercial service companies, this is expressed in terms of profit, since profit is the one universally accepted criterion by which efficiency can be evaluated. From this, it follows that stated desires such as to “expand market share”, “increase sales” or “improve productivity” are not objectives, but are actually strategies at a corporate level, since they are the means by which the company will achieve its profit objectives.

To sum up, the purpose of this phase, when taken together, the mission statement and corporate objectives provide the strategic context for what follows in the marketing planning process.

Phase II: Conducting a situation review

While the purpose of the first phase, the corporate strategic context, was to provide marketing planning with a sense of strategic direction, the situation review is concerned with evaluating the future prospects of the services company.

Step 3: Marketing audit

The purpose of the marketing audit is to gather all the relevant data which can determine how well equipped the service organization is to compete in its chosen marketing arena now and in the future. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Much of the data collected comes from external sources, and is concerned with the business and economic environment, together with market and competitor analysis. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Not only is the current situation analyzed, but also future trends and their significance are considered. Internal sources provide additional information and help to identify the company's strengths and weaknesses.

Step 4: Analysis of internal and external factors

The purpose of internal and external factors (SWOT) analysis is to identify the key components of marketing information from the vast amount of the data generated by the marketing audit. By grouping all the salient information under these four headings, it becomes possible for the organization to highlight the external opportunities and threats, and to weight them against its current internal strengths and weaknesses. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Once in possession of this information, the way forward becomes clearer.

Step 5: Key assumptions

The marketing audit and the subsequent SWOT analysis can only reflect reality if some assumptions are made about the future. These might concern the number of the competitors, the political climate, the general economic well-being of certain markets, and so on.

Phase III: Formulating marketing objectives and strategies

Here comes, the most important phase for marketing planning process is the marketing objective and strategy formulation phase. Unless this step is carried out well, everything which follows will lack focus and cohesion. Not only does it outline the company's marketing strategy, but it also specifies how it will be accomplished.

Step 6: Marketing objectives and strategies

The SWOT analyses and key assumptions steps provide the marketing planner with the data with which to set marketing objectives and strategies. The marketing objectives will be concerned about which services are provided for which markets. It is important to be clear from the outset about the difference between marketing objectives and marketing strategies. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Although these terms are frequently used fairly loosely within companies, we consider that they should be defined more precisely for the purposes of marketing planning.

- A marketing objective is a precise statement which outlines what is to be accomplished by the service company's marketing activities.
- A marketing strategy is the means by which a marketing objective is achieved and are generally concerned with the seven major elements of the services marketing mix

The purpose of setting marketing objectives is to target the profit, revenue and market share we wish to achieve to satisfy the mission. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Consecutively, this provides the direction for marketing strategies to bring together a marketing mix to achieve the objectives for each segment.

Marketing objectives

Following identification and statement of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the explicit statement of assumptions about conditions affecting the business, setting marketing objectives is the most important step in the marketing

planning process. The important point about marketing objectives is that they should be about services and markets only. Since change is inevitable, it is necessary for company to consider the two main dimensions of commercial growth, i.e. service development and market development. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) As mentioned by McDonald & Payne, marketing objectives are concerned with the following:

- Selling exiting services to existing segments
- Developing new services for existing segments
- Extending existing services to new segments
- Developing new services for new segments.

The Ansoff matrix produced by Igor Ansoff was use to identify the strategic direction for the company. Furthermore, Igor Ansoff also mentioned that the greater the degree of newness the greater risk for company to invest. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) The matrix show below is the version that reproduces from the original matrix to explain the characteristic and degree of risk for each approach.

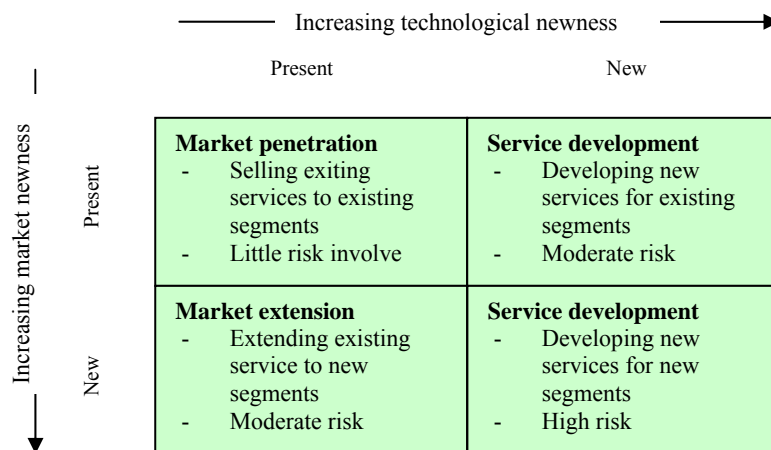


Figure 3: Ansoff Matrix

Source: McDonald & Payne, 2006, p.149

In addition, a marketing objective should meet several criteria mentioned by McDonald are as follow:

- *Relevant* – in relation to the corporate mission and objectives.
- *Specific* – it should focus on a clear and specific goal.
- *Measurable* – it should be in quantifiable terms.
- *Time bound* – it should have an achievement date.
- *Challenging* – it should be realizable, but at the same time stretching for individuals and the organization as a whole.
- *Focused* – it should be concerned only with markets and services which the company plans to address.

Marketing strategies

As outlined earlier, marketing strategy is the overall route to the achievement of specific objectives and should describe the means by which marketing objectives are to be reached. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Marketing strategies should state in broad terms how the marketing objectives are to be achieved, as recommended by McDonald & Payne following is some examples:

- The specific service policies (the range, technical specifications, additions, deletions, etc.).
- The pricing policies to be followed for service groups in particular market segments.
- The customer service levels to be provides for specific market segments (such as maintenance support)
- The policies for communicating with customers under each of the main heading, such as sales force, advertising, sales promotion, etc., as appropriate.

2.1.1 SWOT Analysis

This remarkable piece of history as to the origins of SWOT analysis was provided by Albert S Humphrey, one of the founding fathers of what we know today as SWOT analysis. (Businessball 2008)

The SWOT analysis is a useful tool for understanding and decision-making for all sorts of situations in business and organizations. (Businessball 2008) Kotler stated that the SWOT analysis draws the critical strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). SWOT analysis distils these data to show the critical items from the internal and external audits. The number of items is small for forceful communications, and they show where a business should focus its attention. (Kotler et al. 2005, p.58) Moreover, the external and internal factors have a great influence on an organization's marketing activities. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005)

External Environment Analysis

The external environment analysis comprises of opportunity and threat analysis. The company needs to identify the main threats and opportunities that their company faces. The purpose of the analysis is to make the developments that can have an impact on the firm. The opportunities and threat can consider from the economic climate, demographic changes, market, technology, competitive activity, channel pressure, politic, etc. (Kotler et al. 2005)

Opportunities and threats tend to focus on the present and the future, taking a more outward looking, strategic view of likely developments and options. Many opportunities and threats emerge from the marketing environment, when shifts in demographic and cultural factors are taken into account. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005)

Not all threats call for the same attention or concern – the manager should assess the likelihood of each threat and the potential damage each could cause. The manager should then focus on the most probable and harmful threats and prepare plans in advance to meet them. (Kotler et al. 2005)

Opportunities occur when an environmental trend plays to a company's strength. Each opportunity should be accessed according to its potential attractiveness and the company's probability of success. Companies can rarely find ideal opportunities that exactly fit their objective and resources. The development of opportunities involves risks. When evaluating opportunities, the manager must decide whether the expected return justifies these risks. A trend or development can be a threat or an opportunity, depending on a company's strengths. (Kotler et al. 2005)

Internal Environment Analysis

The strengths and weaknesses tend to focus on the present and past, and on internally controlled factors, such as the 4Ps and the overall marketing package (including customer service) offered to the target market. The external environment is not totally ignored; however, and many strengths and weaknesses can only be defined as such in a competitive context. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005, p. 408)

The strengths and weakness in the SWOT analysis do not list all features of a company, but only those relating to critical success factors. It is nice to be good at something, but it can be a weakness if the competition is stronger. (Kotler et al. 2005)

Here is the SWOT analysis template adapted from Marketing Plans for Service Businesses book to give some of example criteria to the SWOT analysis.

Strengths – Weakness	Opportunities – Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location and geographical? - Capabilities? - Competitive advantages? - Unique selling points? - Resources, Assets, People? - Experience, knowledge, data? - Price, value, quality? - Hotel facilities provided – various? - Service? - Process? - Any limitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competitor intentions - various? - Market demand? - New technologies, services, ideas? - Vital contracts and partners? - Sustaining internal capabilities? - Obstacles faced? - Market developments? - Competitors' vulnerabilities? - Industry or lifestyle trends? - New markets, vertical, horizontal? - Partnerships, agencies, distribution?

Figure 4: Framework for SWOT analysis factor

Source: Based on Brassington & Pettitt, S 2005, Essentials of marketing

The manager should also outline specific strategies for such marketing mix elements in each target market: new products, field sales, advertising, sales promotion, prices and distribution. The manager should explain how each strategy responds to the threats, opportunities and critical issue. (Kotler et al. 2005, p.77)

2.1.2 The Company's macroenvironment

The company and all the other actors operate in a larger macroenvironment of forces that shape opportunities and pose threats to the company. (Kotler et al. 2005, p.91)

There are six influential forces in the company's macroenvironment which are demographic forces, economic forces, natural forces, technological forces, Political forces, and culture forces.

However, in this thesis, the researcher will consider only the three most influent to the case study which is the demographic forces, economic force, and the last, culture forces. Therefore, only these three forces will be described as following.

Demographic environment

Demography is the study of human populations in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race, occupation and other statistics. The demographic environment is considered interest to marketers because it involves people, and people make up markets. (Kotler et al. 2005, p. 91)

Economic environment

Markets require buying power as well as people. The economic environment consists of factors that affect consumer purchasing power and spending patterns. Marketers must pay close attention to major trends and consumer spending patterns both across and within their world market. (Kotler et al. 2005, p. 102)

Culture environment

The culture environment is made up of institutions and other forces that affect society's basic values, perceptions, preference and behaviors. People grow up in a particular society that shape their basic beliefs and values. They absorb a world-view that defines their relationships with others. The following cultural characteristics can affect marketing decision making. Marketers must be aware of these cultural influences and how they might vary across societies within the markets served by the firm. (Kotler et al. 2005, p. 111)

2.1.3 Market segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of splitting customers, or potential customers, in the overall market by characterized into separate sets of customers (segments) who have separate identifiable needs. (McDonald & Payne, 2006)

There are a number of different ways of identifying consumer market segments in terms of customer characteristics as follow:

1. Demographics

Demographics is the study of populations and their characteristic. In consumer service markets, demographics refer to a number of factors including sex, age, family size and etc. (McDonald & Payne, 2006)

2. Socioeconomic

This factor is based on variables such as income levels, education background, social class, ethnic origin, and etc. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Furthermore, by understanding wider trends in demographics and socioeconomics, the company can predict how future demand might affected.

3. Psychographics

This is more developed form of segmenting customers and is concerned with defining people's behavior and lifestyles. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) This factor is based on variables such as customer attitudes, underlying personality types, motivation and aspiration.

4. Geography

Geographical segmentation is relatively simple and is often among the first approach considered by many services organizations because it can help identify where customers are located and how to reach them. (McDonald & Payne, 2006)

Market segmentation process

The segmentation process follows four broad stages as show below.

1. Define the market to be addressed

Market definition involves specifying the customer group to which the company is seeking to market its services. (McDonald & Payne, 2006) Though, choice of a market to be addressed involves a consideration of the following:

- Type of customers to be services
- Geographic scope
- Breadth of services to be provided
- Decisions regarding single or multisite distribution
- Areas of the value-added chain in which the service organization decides to be involved.

2. List who buys

At this process, the factors that outlined above were use to identify who buys product/services of the company.

3. List what is bought

A comprehensive list should be made of the characteristics of company services, including the different ways in which they are used, *where* they are bought (channels), *when* they are bought, and *how* (option for payment). (McDonald & Payne, 2006)

4. Forming segment group

At this point, the market research, clustering software, or researchers own judgment were use to combine various factors explained above to identify the target customer of the company.

2.2 Marketing mix for services

The manager should also outline specific strategies for such marketing mix elements in each target market: new products, field sales, advertising, sales promotion, prices and distribution. The manager should explain how each strategy responds to the threats, opportunities and critical issue. (Kotler et al. 2005, p.77)

In order to be able to satisfy the needs and wants of the market, the organization needs to design a market offering and present it to the market for consumption. One of the

most famous tools which could help the organization success the above objectives is the “Marketing Mix”.

The term “Marketing Mix” was established by Neil H Borden by his 1964 article, *The Concept of the Marketing Mix*. McCarthy (1960) grouped the ingredients in Borden’s Marketing Mix into 4 categories which are product, price, place, and promotion. These four elements are necessary for organization to consider in order to success in the marketing. The four elements or “4Ps” are described as per below:

1. *Product (or market entity)*

This element is concerned about the nature of their customers’ requirements. Once the marketers know about the customers’ need, they should have use of this knowledge to design the product or service to meet their customers’ satisfaction. The defining the range of goods or services that will be produced such as for how long they will be produced and how they will be package is also one factor which needs to consider. (McCarthy, 1960) A hotel company might treat each of its hotels as a separate product with its own unique product management requirements arising from its location, the state of the building and its facilities, local competition, and its strengths and weaknesses compared with others in the area. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005, p. 438)

2. *Price*

Because services are intangible, their pricing can be very difficult to set and to justify. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005) The service providers are completely free to decide their own prices, with due respect to competition and the needs, wants and perceptions of customers. In setting prices, however, service providers can find it very difficult to determine the true cost of provision, perhaps because of the difficulty of costing professional or specialist skills, or because the time and effort required to deliver a service vary widely between different customers, yet a standard price is needed. (Brassington & Pettitt 2005, p. 439) Kotler and Amstrong (2004) refers that the normally people prefer lower price, but for some produce, when the quality is concerned, the low price is no more attractive.

3. *Place*

The third element, place, McCarthy (1960) stated that it refers to the channel or routes of distribution to the market it is intended to use. It includes which type of outlet or physical distribution to be used for introducing the product to their target customers.

4. *Promotion*

The final ‘P’ of McCarthy’s mix refers to all the promotional tools that could be employ to stimulate an interest in the minds of consumers and ultimately an intention to purchase. ‘Promotion’ hence includes a consideration of advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, personal selling, and exhibitions/trade fairs. (McCarthy, 1960) In the same direction, promotion is the way that company communicate the benefit or value add of their product or service to persuade the target customer to buy them. (Kortler and Amstrong, 2004)

The four Ps is available for the organization to consider and define clearly of their physical product; however, for the service provider company, the four Ps from Marketing Mix is not adequate. Since the hotels are more concerned with services it is worth taking to a brief look at an extension to the mix proposed by Booms and Bitner (1981). This the authors refer to the '7Ps' of marketing where the additional three Ps are as follows:

5. *Physical evidence*

Service marketers need to consider the surrounding environment where the service will be delivered. The physical evidence is included in two aspect of tangible and intangible. The tangible means the good which help to perform and communicate the service. It includes the physical design and layout of their outlet to maximize visitor interaction. Another aspect is the intangible which is the ability of company to relay on their customer to pass on their experience to the potential customer. (Booms and Bitner, 1981)

6. *Process*

The process is the series of events that dynamically combine to deliver a service to the consumer. The flow of the activities that will be encountered by service customers are also worthy of specific attention. The number of steps comprise of service and the extent to which customer involvement is necessary in the process to be considered. (Booms and Bitner, 1981) The service provider needs smooth, efficient customer-friendly procedures. (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005)

7. *People*

People are the most importance element of any services. Since the people an organization employs are often part of the overall service experience encountered by the customers. This people who referred involve the staff both direct and indirect to the customer consumption of service such as employees, management, customer, etc. This element hence involves a consideration of the employment, training, and motivation of individual members of services staff. Sometimes the role of the customer is also an important part of services too. In many times, the participation is an essential part to derive the benefit of services. For the hotel service, customer buy the service, by having the staff with the positive attitude, skills and appearance are necessary. (Booms and Bitner, 1981)

3. Methodology

3.1 Choice of topic

Nowadays, as stated in the introduction, the numbers of tourists are dropped because of many factors such as the unstable political and the crisis of economics which have the great impact for Thailand's reputation and affect the every single business including the hotel business. Therefore, the researchers realized that the hotel business which is only focusing on the room accommodations is not enough, also in each hotel; there are many business/outlet that can gain the income to the company. The second largest income for the hotel business is banqueting.

Moreover, for the wedding function in Amari Atrium Hotel had dropped year by year because of many reasons such as the high rates, less complimentary, high competition, the availability of the function rooms, etc.

On the other hand, wedding business, recently, has the rapid growth from the total value of this market increase from 3,000 million baht in 2006 to 5,000 million baht in 2007.

With the high interesting in both field of business, full wedding service and hotel business, the researchers also understand of the current situation confronted by the Amari Atrium Hotel, plus the good connection with the key persons in the hotel and past worked experience as mention earlier, which all of these factors lead to outcome of creating the topic aiming to help the management and Sales and Marketing Department of Amari Atrium Hotel for considering the marketing strategy for wedding business.

3.2 Chosen theories

In order to analyze full marketing plan for Amari Atrium Hotel for the diversified wedding business, two main management theories will be used to analyze the primary and secondary data.

According to the strategic question of this thesis which "*What should be the marketing strategies for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel?*", the first main chosen theory deals with the concept from Malcolm McDonald about "The marketing planning process for services" that illustrated the outline of marketing planning process for service organizations which consisted of four phases: establishing the strategic context; conducting the situation review; formulating marketing objectives and strategies; allocating budgets and devising a detailed first-year implementation plan. (M.Mcdonald,2002) However, as this thesis aiming to the outcome of the strategy in marketing context only. Though, the framework of marketing planning process were adapted from the original by using only three phases to formulated the marketing strategies without the detail of resource and budget allocation in phase four as suggested by Malcolm McDonald.

Another main theory uses in this thesis in order to creates marketing strategies involves with the marketing mix for services (7P's) proposed by Booms and Bitner

which extended from the general concept “Marketing mix” with three additional Ps regarding to people, physical evidence and process. (Booms and Bitner,1981) In order to create a specific action for marketing strategy, marketing mix theory were integrated with another concepts that provide a specific strategy in each element of marketing mix for services such as promotional mix which consists of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. (Ghauri and Cateora,2005) Nevertheless, the specific those theory and concept were not use to analyze but some context in those concepts were use to suggest about specific approach towards the marketing strategy in each element of marketing mix in recommendation part.

Moreover, as a part in the marketing planning process, the SWOT analysis tool which created by Albert Humphrey were used to understand the internal strength and weaknesses of the company, and to identify the external environment toward the opportunity and threat that the company faces. Anyway, at this thesis we reproduce the original SWOT analysis tool related to the topic of this thesis that aiming about services. Furthermore, in order to understand more about the external factor another concept involved with six macro environmental forces that affect to the company performance introduced by Phillip Kotler. (Kotler et al., 2005) Anyway, only three selected forces from six factors which consisted of economic, cultural and demographic forces that had the most influence to the opportunity and threat of the company were used in this thesis.

Apart from the SWOT analysis and macro environment analysis, market segmentation is implemented to analyze for the target market of which potential group that the hotel should put their attention to. Moreover the Ansoff matrix by Igor Ansoff is also brought to analyze the company strategic direction in order to formulate the marketing objective.

3.3 Collecting Information / data collection

This research is mainly focused on the information gathering from the primary data insight and in-dept information for this market and very useful for the target audience. Moreover, the researchers realized that the secondary data can give us the general overview for this market.

3.3.1 Primary data

The primary data is gathering by two research instruments. First, it is the interview which focuses with the following interviewees.

Interview

The researchers, firstly, conducted the interview with **wedding planners** in Thailand to see what their opinions about this market are; also researchers could know what the product or service that they provide to the customer. In addition, the researchers believe that since they are in this market before, they would have some idea of what is lack in this market. There are four wedding planners are being chosen for our interview with the help and recommendation from Mr. Tatthanan Wechwongchai, a Assistant Director of Sales (Corporate) from Amari Atrium Hotel, which are, the Wedding Planner company, the As Your Mind company, the Wedding Answer company, and the Bangkok Wedding company. Unluckily, there are only two

wedding companies, As Your Mind company and Bangkok Wedding company, are willing to answer the interview. However, the researchers believe that their answers are enough to give us the general overview and help us to understand more of this business industry.

Moreover, certainly, researchers conducted the interview with *Sales and marketing department* to see any requirements from the customers' side, and also this department is close with the customer and knows what the customers want. In addition, the Resident Manager of Amari Atrium Hotel, Mr. Niwatcharee Wangsoonthorn, will be one of the interviewee. She has worked with Amari Hotel and Resort over eight years; therefore, the researchers believe her point of view as an executive manager who especially in charge of sales and marketing, also she is the key person who can give us the in-dept information regarding what the Amari Atrium Hotel is planning to do. Besides, Mr. Tatthanan Wechwongchai, a Assistant Director of Sales (Corporate) is willing to helping the researchers to answer those interview questions as well.

The researchers decided to conduct the interview via telephone and web based (email) interview. The telephone interview is started aiming to have better explanation of the project, and the communication between interviewers and interviewees is more clarify. Moreover, the researchers realized that as we both, interviewers and interviewees are Thai; therefore, the confusing caused by misunderstand of languages and accent (back translation) is not occurred. However, some statistic data, specific data such as the company's profile and name, documentary, and follow up information can be gathered by the web base interview.

Research instrument: Interview

1. Interview question: Sales and marketing department

The questions listed are aimed to gain the general overview of the hotel and their wedding service providing.

General info of hotel

Question	Aiming
1. What is the ATH mission statement?	To gain the information about company's mission statement
2. What is the ATH corporate objective?	To gain the information about company's corporate objective.
3. What is your additional value service out of the standard provided for customer?	To identify between the standard and additional product and service that ATH offer to customers.
4. Please tell us more about general information of your hotel i.e. hotel location, product and service.	To gain general information of ATH.

General info of wedding business

Question	Aiming
1. Who are your competitors in the wedding business?	To gain information about competitors of the hotel.
2. What is your objective for the new wedding business unit?	To gain information about the objective of the hotel why they diversify to wedding business.
3. When you diversified the hotel business to wedding business, what are the company's constrain and limitation?	To gain information about threat and limitation of the hotel in wedding business unit.
4. What is your current service range (service provided) in the wedding business?	To gain expert information about product and service of the hotel in wedding business unit.
5. What do you think of your current service match with need of your wedding customer?	To understand and gain information about current service offer compare to requirement of customers.
6. What do you think about the competition in the wedding business that you are going to compete with?	To gain information about current competition of the hotel in wedding business.
7. How do you communicate to your customer? Which distribution do you use?	To gain information about channel of communication and distribution channel of the hotel in wedding business.
8. What are the problems you face when arranging the wedding ceremony? (according to the 7P's – product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process)	To gain more information about hotel's 7Ps in wedding business.

2. Interview question: Wedding planner

These questions below are aimed to gain the knowledge about the wedding planner business which will be further used in the finding part.

Market structure

Question	Aiming
1. In this business, how much does the company need to invest for starting up the business?	To gain information about capital investment to establishing wedding planner company.
2. Do you think this business need a high experience to run the business?	To understand and gain information towards experience in wedding business in order to establishing wedding planner company.
3. How do you get through the customers? (for example attending the wedding fair, via internet website) How easy you can get through them?	To gain information about channel of communication and distribution between wedding planner and customers.
4. Which factors have the influence in	To gain expert information about

the wedding business?	influence factors towards this business.
5. What kind of supplier do you have? (For example photographer, card makers, flower decorators)	To gain information about suppliers in this business.
6. Please tell us about the suppliers towards wedding planner business in your point of view. (access channel to supplier, the important of supplier, skill of supplier and etc.)	To gain expert information about suppliers in this business.
7. What are the main products and services you provide?	To gain information about product and service that wedding planner offer to customers.

Market trend

Question	Aiming
1. How does the customer choose the wedding service? What are the main factors influenced to the decision making of customer?	To gain information about the main influence factors towards decision making of customers in perspective of wedding planner.
2. What are the profits for the customer of choosing the wedding planner? Is it worth to purchase the service?	To gain information about the benefit of wedding planner to customers in perspective of wedding planner.
3. Between price and quality, which factor the customer take firstly into the consideration?	To identify which factors between price and quality that most influence to customers.
4. What do you think about this current situation in the wedding market?	To gain information about current market trend of wedding business.
5. Which distribution channel is the most influence to the customer purchasing decision?	To gain expert information about channel of distribution in perspective of wedding planner.

Current Competition

Question	Aiming
1. What do you think of the current situation in competition in this business	To gain information about current competition in wedding market.
2. Except from the other wedding company, do you have any competitors in this industry	To gain expert information about other competitors for related business in this market.
3. Does customer have many alternative choice of selecting the wedding service? How?	To gain more information about the options of customers in order to select wedding services.
4. Does the reputation of the company have any effect to the consumer decision making	To gain information about the perspective of wedding planner towards the reputation of company in this business.
5. Is the number of supplier having any effect to the competition in this market	To identify the relation between supplier and competition that effect to this business.

Questionnaire

Another instrument for gathering the primary data is obtained by using a survey questionnaire by distribution to target respondents, who are couples having plan to marry. A survey questionnaire composed with three parts. First part is the profile of respondents which provide general information of the consumer. Second part concerns about the purchasing behavior of respondents. This part provides information for ATH to design marketing strategies fitting to their target group. (tick boxes) The third part is designed according to the extended marketing mix (7P's) theory. This part uses the Likert-scale to analyze the preference of the target customers in order to weight the important factors of each marketing elements (product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evident). The methodology and data gathering for the questionnaire are as follows:

Sample size and sampling frame

According to the National Statistic Office (NSO, 2004) the population in Thailand for 2007 is 63,038,247 people. As stated by Fisher, the size of sample you need depends in part on the size of the margin of error you are prepared to accept and the size of the population from which you are going to take the sample. (Fisher, 2004, p.159) Though, in order to reduce the margin of error, the considering of a sample size that represents the whole population has to be taking to make our research more reliable. By this way, the quota sampling techniques were applied to use in this research by selecting the sample with non-random method. Though, the total number of sample that the researchers distributed to the respondents applied from the suggestion of Fisher for the sample size of the population over than one million is 384 samples with the margin error of 5% which in this thesis target customer of Amari Atrium Hotel come from the population of the people living in Bangkok is 5,716,248 peoples. (Fisher, 2004, p.160)

Regarding to the sampling frame, as our focal company based in Bangkok the capital city of Thailand and our target customers are the couples who plan to marry, though our questionnaire were distributed to the wedding exhibition organize in Bangkok (The National Thai Wedding Fair Exhibition which is took place at the Central World Plaza on 1-5 May 2006) and also send to the customers of Amari Atrium Hotel by web based. In addition, our sampling frame also targeted the respondents to Thai couples who plan to marry which can answer the question relating to the aiming of the questionnaire in order to understand the buying behavior of customers. At this point, our research then applied the purposive sampling technique mentioned by Fisher that the researcher puts into their sample whoever they can obtain access to or whoever they think may be appropriate respondents for the questions they want to ask. (Fisher, 2004, p.161)

The sampling frames of our questionnaire are as below:

List	Detail
1. Target respondents	- Couples who plan to marry
2. Distribution of questionnaire	- Questionnaire were sent at wedding exhibition and collected by hired surveyor - Questionnaire also sent to the customers of Amari Atrium Hotel through e-mail
3. Number of questionnaire distributed	- 500 copies (250 copies are sent by web based and another 250 copies are distribute at the wedding exhibition)
4. Number of questionnaire responded	- 384 copies
5. Duration	- 01/05/2008 – 15/05/2008

Research instrument: Questionnaire

The questionnaires are used in this research consists with three parts. First part is the profile of respondents. Second part is the purchasing behavior of respondents. The first and second part used the dichotomous and multiple choice questions. (Fisher, 2004, p.162) The third part used the Likert-scale and designed according to the marketing mix of service (7P's) theory.

Part I: Profile of respondents

This involve with the profile of respondent to identify the demographic of the groom and the bride which is the target customer in wedding business for Amari Atrium Hotel. Moreover, the survey question of this part was constituted with both profile of the groom and the bride to identify the characteristic of them together.

The Groom

1. Religion

- Buddhist Christian Islamic
 Other.....

2. Ethic

- Thai Chinese Indian
 Western Other.....

The Bride

1. Religion

- Buddhist Christian Islamic
 Other.....

2. Ethic

- Thai Chinese Indian
 Western Other.....

3. Occupation

- self-employment
- student
- government employment
- unemployment

- private company
- other professions

3. Occupation

- self-employment
- student
- government employment
- unemployment

- private company
- other professions

4. Personal annual income (in Thai baht)

- Less than 10,000 baht/month
- 10,000-19,999 baht/month
- 20,000-29,999 baht/month
- 30,000-39,999 baht/month
- 40,000-49,999 baht/month
- 60,000 baht and above

4. Personal annual income (in Thai baht)

- Less than 10,000 baht/month
- 10,000-19,999 baht/month
- 20,000-29,999 baht/month
- 30,000-39,999 baht/month
- 40,000-49,999 baht/month
- 60,000 baht and above

Part II: Purchasing behavior

This part provided the useful information for ATH about the purchasing behavior of their target customer in wedding service in order to create the appropriate strategy to meet the target customer needs. The survey question at this part was asked with both the groom and the bride together in one form. The information gathering from this part illustrated the perspective and purchasing behavior of both the groom and the bride as one that they were made a decision making together.

1. What type of the wedding ceremony that you tend to arrange? (If the answer is “Non-traditional ceremony only”, please skip to the question number 3.)

- Traditional ceremony only
- Non-traditional ceremony only
- Both

2. What is your preferable type of traditional wedding ceremony? (More than one answer is possible)

- Thai style
- Chinese style
- Indian style
- Western style
- Other.....

3. Where do you get into the information about your wedding ceremony? (More than one answer is possible)

- Internet
- Wedding exhibition
- Wedding magazine
- Wedding planner agent
- Experience married couples
- Radio
- Television
- Other.....

4. Which source of information is the most influence to you and your couple making decision to choose the wedding services? Please give the rank of the following choices. (Respectively 1-7: 1=the most, 7=the least)

- Internet
- Wedding planner agent
- Television
- Wedding exhibition
- Experience married couples
- Wedding magazine
- Radio

5. Who is the most influence to you and your couple making decision to choose the wedding services? Please give the rank of the following choices. (Respectively 1-5: 1=the most, 5=the least)

- Parents
- Wedding planner agent
- Own decision with couple
- Experience married couples
- Friends

6. What do you think about the wedding planner service to help you organize the ceremony?

- Unnecessary
- Necessary

7. What do you think is the important thing for your ceremony? Please give the rank of the following choices. (Respectively 1-11: 1=the most, 11=the least)

- Location for your ceremony
- Sequence in your ceremony
- Wedding suite
- VDO & Presentation
- Wedding photo
- Card & Souvenir stuff
- Theme of the ceremony
- Beauty & Cosmetic
- Food & Beverage
- Music
- Wedding cake
- Other.....

8. Which is the most important criteria for you and your couple to choose the wedding services?

- Good reputation of the company/ provider
- Variety services offer
- Recommend from other people
- Other.....
- Budgetary cost

9. Who pay for the expenditure of your wedding ceremony?

- Groom Bride Parents
 Sharing between Groom and Bride Sharing between Groom, Bride and Parents Other.....

10. How much for the total budget do you tend to spend on your wedding ceremony?

- Less than 200,000 Baht 200,000 – 400,000 Baht 400,000-600,000 Baht
 600,000 – 800,000 Baht 1 million or more

11. What kind of payment method that you prefer to pay?

- Cash Credit card Debit card
 Half-Half between cash and credit card Loan provide through credit card

III: The importance level of marketing mix for wedding service that influences purchasing decision of customers

The following survey questions are designed according to the marketing mix for services. The data collected were used to analyze the significant level of target customers in terms of marketing mix for services. As same as in the part II, this part also surveyed the opinion of both the groom and the bride together.

Please tick ✓ the number that best represents your present evaluation

Importance Level Very important = 5 Important = 4 Moderate = 3 Less important = 2
 Unimportant = 1

1. Product/Service

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Size of the function room					
2. Quality of the function room					
3. Variety type of function room (indoor, outdoor, etc.)					
4. Number of equipment provide in function room					
5. Quality of equipment provide in function room					
6. Variety choice of food and beverage					
7. Quality of food and beverage					
8. Quantity of food and beverage					
9. Variety choice of other product & service (variety choice of music, variety choice of wedding suite & cake, etc.)					
10. Quality of other product & service (music, wedding suite & cake, etc.)					
11. Reputation of service provider					
12. Creative wedding theme					

2. Price

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Reasonable price with quality of product & service 2. Reasonable price with full product & service provide 3. Payment option 4. Price elasticity and negotiability 5. Low price than other competitor					

3. Place

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Good location to get access (easy access by sky-train or underground) 2. Enough car parking facility 3. Image and decoration of the venue Channel of contact 4.1 Internet 4.2 Phone 4.3 Sales persons 4.4 Agent company					

4. Promotion

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Sale promotion 2. Sales persons with good advise 3. Public relation that create good image 4. Public relation that direct access to target customer 5. Promotion & Package in wedding exhibition 6. Variety of promotion & package offering					

5. Physical evidence

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Cleanliness of the venue and function room 2. Pleasant atmosphere of the venue and function room 3. Romantic atmosphere of the venue and function room 4. Luxury atmosphere of the venue and function room 5. Good signs and symbols direction 6. Convenient and comfortable facilities (toilets, table at public hall, elevator, etc.)					

7. Decoration of the function room					
8. Appropriate light of the function room					

6. Process

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Pre wedding service process					
1.1 Procedure and documentation for reservation					
1.2 Cooperation between customer and organize persons in wedding service					
1.3 Readiness of function room and facilities					
1.4 Readiness of service provider					
2. During wedding service process					
2.1 Well organize of necessary equipment and facilities					
2.2 Well organize of ceremony sequence					
2.3 Well organize on specific extra service by request					
3. After wedding service process					
3.1 Bills are easy to audit					
3.2 Bills are ready after event					
3.3 The follow up of service evaluation after event					
3.4 Thank you process for using service					

7. People

Marketing Mix Factors	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Willingness and attention of the staff (service mind)					
2. Ability to coordinate with all related persons					
3. Courtesy and politeness					
4. Professionalism					
5. Ability to solving problem					
6. Specialize know how to give an advice					
7. Good looking and nice uniform					

3.3.2 Secondary data

The secondary data is gathered mostly via internet which Fisher defined that it is the very careful source of material (Fisher 2004, p.65); however, the researchers are aware of the possible inaccuracy of information presented on Internet. Therefore the researchers analyzed the websites before the researchers used them and based our project mainly on corporate websites. The secondary data could also help our thesis of

gathering the information in the subject of the general information of wedding business, statistic of Thai wedding market, roles of wedding planner, relevance concept of theory/strategy, and so on. Moreover, the books - textbooks which are useful to help the researchers orient in a field of literature and as a source of references that can be followed up (Fisher 2004, p.64) – are also brought to help us understanding mostly in the theoretical framework part with fully explanation of each theories. (see more in the reference list)

3.4 The analysis of information

The information from the finding is analyzed systematically according to the empirical finding gathering from primary and secondary data. In the secondary data, the information regarding the quantitative and qualitative data of wedding market in order to analyze the characteristic of wedding business and the current situation in Thailand market.

For the primary data, the interview is used to identify the structure of hotel business and wedding business in order to understand the internal strength and weakness of the company, and to identify opportunity and threat from external environment of this market while the questionnaire concerned about the perspective of target customers towards the marketing mix for service which aiming to create the marketing strategy for wedding business unit of Amari Atrium Hotel.

The primary data from the questionnaires is interpreted in quantitative on the following:

Profile of the respondents and consumer behavior

The frequency and percentage were employed to analyze the data regarding the characteristics of the respondents and their behavior that influence the decision to select a wedding service.

Extended marketing mix

In this part the Likert-scale was used. This scale equals a mark, with most important five points and one point down every time to not important one point. Then, these points are being calculated as mean to see what the respondents see as important to their decision making for wedding services. The level of average scores used to describe the level of respondent's attitude will be classified at the interval range. The class of interval range was computed from the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Range of scores} &= \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest score}}{\text{Number of interval}} \\ \text{Interval of Scores} &= \frac{5 - 1}{5} \\ &= 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

This method will describe how consumers perceive various dimensions with the level of importance that they recognize to such dimensions.

The mean and score range can be demonstrated as follows:

mean range	Meaning
	Importance level
1.00 - 1.80	"Not Important"
1.81 - 2.60	"Less Important"
2.61 - 3.40	"Moderate"
3.41 - 4.20	"Important"
4.21 - 5.00	"Very Important"

3.5 Research process

The process of this thesis is in-line according to the processes of researching and writing a Master's research (Fisher C. 2004, p. 4) that the researchers started with the choosing a topic and designing the project. Thinking about choice of topic and what approach to research is going to be adopted leads to finding out about possible topic and investigating the range of research methods available. (Fisher C. 2004, p. 4) We came up, finally, creating the marketing strategy Amari Atrium Hotel in their full wedding service.

The researchers searched for books, databases, journals, the World Wide Web and other materials which are relevant to the project to finding out what resources are available. This phrase also help us to understand more about the details and information about wedding planner market in term of product itself and market.

When the researchers chose the topic including writing a critical literature review, and then we started to developing concepts, conceptual frameworks and theories. In this research, the researchers followed the concept of Malcolm McDonald, the marketing planning process and an extension of the marketing mix proposed by Booms and Bitner that are like a "map" drawn together the concepts that the researchers will use to guide the thesis.

After that, the researchers collected and analyzed research material which based on the conceptual framework and matching the information the researchers gained during this stage. This is what the researchers have to decide in detail how the researchers are going to conduct the research and organize the practical aspects of conducting interview, identifying people to send questionnaires to and so on. (Fisher C. 2004, p. 5) Not only searching from the primary data, but also the secondary data.

When all the research material is enough, then the researchers interpreted research material and drawing conclusion. Fisher stated that the realist research tries to explain things by modeling the relationships between variables. (Fisher C. 2004, p. 213) Our research is the realist approached which is connected by cause and effect. The last step is forming arguments and writing up the research. The process moves away from 'finding out' towards 'thinking'

3.6 Limitation

Since Amari Hotel and Resorts has twelve properties around Thailand, even they are under the same brand, but with the distances and difference surrounded environment could not give them the same practice, especially marketing strategy. Therefore, firstly in this thesis, the researchers aim to create marketing strategy for the four Amari Hotels and Resorts which are located in Bangkok regarding to many constrains such as hard to get access to key person in each hotel together with the management style of each hotel is differently. Each hotel decides their own marketing strategy to fit with there target market, and later, they will propose to the head office. From these reasons, the researchers take this into our consideration that our thesis will not much useful if the researchers provided the marketing strategy to the head office. Therefore, the researchers decided to focus only one hotel, Amari Atrium hotel, to be our case study.

Moreover, this thesis is not concern with the market audit regarding some information about the hotel's budget is confidential. Therefore, from this point, the researchers have recommended the hotel in the recommendation part that hotel should analyze their budget audit further on for their full wedding service.

4. Empirical finding

The empirical finding is comprised of Amari Atrium Hotel overview, Thailand environment factor, Wedding market in Bangkok, consumer behavior toward the wedding services, and influences of marketing mix towards wedding services.

4.1 Amari Atrium Hotel overview

4.1.1 Company mission statement

“The Amari Atrium Hotel - A place where exceeding guest expectations come naturally”. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May) The guideline to achieve for this statement mission is to:

1. Demonstrating a “Yes I can!” attitude through listening understanding and responding positively in all situations (No, No’s) solutions to the No’s.
2. Continuously creating opportunities to exceed guest expectations.
3. Extra efforts to satisfy guest needs will be recognized.
4. Treating each other thoughtfully and with respect. Have good collaboration through keeping people informed (team work).
5. Continuously creating opportunities to improve ourselves through training, coaching and feedback.
6. All guest experiences will be friendly, courteous and easy.
7. Seeking guest feedback through active conversation and be visible. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

4.1.2 Corporate objectives

Since the positioning of the hotel is the first class hotel or four stars (on a rating one to five) and directly competing the competitors in this field, the general image of the hotel is to be international standards modern in outlook and design with oriental touches which have friendly, obliging and courteous service throughout the hotel and efficient at the Front Desk, Cashiers, and Business Center. Moreover, as state by the hotel, the hotel is independent operation with no outside influence (from owners and share - holders) (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

The Objective for the hotel

- To be regarded as a different hotel in style, by the variety of its restaurants, and by its location
- To be regarded as trendy, active and inventive place among the people in Bangkok
- To be established as excellent four star properties in the international market place, backed up by solvent, solid and well established owners, and managed by one of Thailand’s oldest hotel groups.

4.1.3 Company structure

4.1.3.1 Product/Service

The first class 4 star (ranked by the Thai-hotel Association) Amari Atrium Hotel is located in the business and residential area of New Petchburi Road, a short walk from “New Petchburi” subway station, with easy connection to the BTS sky train system. (Amari, 2008)

The New Petchburi road is a commercial and residential area - suitable for both leisure guests and business travelers. There is a short walk from “New Petchburi” subway station with convenient access to all parts of the city, and a few minutes away from Asoke, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, the main commercial and shopping areas of Sukhumvit, Pratunam, Rachadapisek, Silom, nearby popular entertainment venues of RCA, Thonglor, and Ekamai. (Amari, 2008)

Mr. Tatthanan comment about the location of the hotel that “actually the location which is not close to the BTS sky train, for MRT subway the guest has to walk around 5-10 minutes. Also the horrible traffic jam in front of the hotel makes the guests do not want to drive the car and it takes so long time to get to the hotel.” (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Amari Atrium Hotel has 22 stories with a 12-storey atrium lobby. The top 2 levels of the hotel comprise the Executive Floors, designed to combine modern technology with comfort and convenience. (Amari, 2008)

Meeting and banqueting facilities range from a Grand Ballroom, meeting or convention rooms to an executive boardroom. The banqueting facilities at the hotel fully adapt themselves for large dinners, theme parties, company meetings, small-scale exhibitions, cocktails, seminars and weddings. A soft refurbishment of this area has also taken place with a new modern carpet design. Additional meeting space has been created at the adjoining building. The banqueting department can provide a variety of specialized events, ranging from Thai to Indian or Chinese themes. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

There are more than 7 function rooms which is not including the break out rooms available for the guest wedding ceremony. Hence, the Bussarakam ballroom is a meeting space for up to 400 persons. This pillarless ballroom accommodates up to 400 persons and can be divided into three large function rooms using soundproof partitions. With a high ceiling, the ballroom is tastefully decorated using Thai fabrics and wood paneling and is perfect for weddings, multi-vision presentations and special events. The detailed information is shown as per below: (Amari, 2008)

Room Name	Busarakam Ballroom	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
Size in metres	13.5 x 22.5	13.5 x 8.0	13.5 x 8.0	13.5 x 6.5
Area (sq.m.)	304	108	108	88
Ceiling Height (metres)	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4
Cocktail Reception (per guests)	400	100	100	100
Formal Dinner (per guests)	200	60	60	60
Buffet lunch/dinner (per guests)	200	50	50	50

Figure 5: Function room information

Source: Amari, 2008

Moreover, the hotel also provides the pre-function foyer for pre-function cocktails, pre-dinner gatherings, after conference & banqueting and break-out sessions. It is directly accessible from the hotel lifts. (Amari, 2008)

In the audio equipment provided for the function room, the hotel use the latest technology, state-of-the-art sound systems are installed in the ballroom and all function rooms. Equipments are available for functions at the Amari Atrium Hotel included: microphone: boom stand, table stand and wireless, loudspeaker: ceiling and mobile computerized sound system, tape recorder: cassette, background music: piped in (one channel)/ CD player, and telephone: Plug-in / Wireless System. (Amari, 2008)

There is the limitation of the function room space since the hotel have limited space which the grand ballroom can only contain around 200 – 250 guests per time. Therefore, the size of the function room hardly supports the wedding ceremony which has the large amount of guest. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May) The problem usually occurs when the number of guests comes to the ceremony was exceeded the limit that firstly hotel agreed with customer. Consequently the staff has change the layout of the function room to support the number of guests. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

As there is one wedding function at a time, it is an advantage for the customer because the staff can fully concentrate in their wedding rather than anything else. Moreover, the guests who join the wedding function do not get confuse about the function room. In many hotels which have many function rooms and held the wedding functions in the same time usually face this problem. Therefore, they need to manage the sign board very well and have staff to lead the guest. So the customers do not have to worry that this problem will occur. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

In the aspect of food and beverage provide, the hotel has variety kinds of menu such as the Thai Buffet, International buffet, cocktail, Chinese table, Thai - Chinese menu. There are 3 menus in package, and there are 3 packages. Therefore, 75 menus are provided for customer to choose. For the Chinese table, the hotel asks the supplier of outsider to make it. Every food categories are selected the ingredient carefully and full of quality. And each function, the hotel has about 10% foods spare in case that the guests come more than the number guaranteed. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

4.1.3.2 Price

The hotel provides various prices for wedding package. Also the wedding couple to select the various types of menu with the price they satisfy and fit with their theme. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May) The table following is presenting the price for each wedding package. From the price set, the customer normally can negotiate with the salesperson to reduce the price until the bottom line or get the complimentary which is not included in the package. However, since the Amari Atrium Hotel is a hotel chain, not individual, it is quite hard for the hotel to offer too much lower price and high complimentary as other competitors usually do in current market. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 18 May)

Moreover, the table provided hereby presents the rate comparison of the wedding package between Amari Atrium Hotel and their competitors which they are mostly four-star hotels.

Type of menu	Cupid of Love		Wedding Bells		Heart to Heart	
	THB	EUR	THB	EUR	THB	EUR
Thai - Chinese Menu	4,999 or 5,499 per person	98.07 or 107.90 per person	5,999 per person	117.71 per person	6,999 per person	137.35 per person
Cocktail Reception	550 per person	10.79 per person	650 per person	12.75 per person	750 per person	14.71 per person
Thai Buffet Menu	550 per person	10.79 per person	650 per person	12.75 per person	750 per person	14.71 per person
International Buffet Menu	650 per person	12.75 per person	750 per person	14.71 per person	850 per person	16.68 per person
Chinese Menu	6,999 per table	137.35 per table	7,999 per table	156.86 per table	8,999 per table	176.48 per table

Figure 6: Wedding package price for Amari Atrium Hotel

**Exchange rate at June 13, 2008: 1 THB = 0.0196111 EUR*

Hotel Name	Wedding Package							
	Menu							
	Cocktail		Thai Buffet		Int'l Buffet		Chinese table	
	THB	EUR	THB	EUR	THB	EUR	THB	EUR
Amari Atrium Hotel	550 / /650 /750	10.78 / /12.74 /14.70	550 / 650 / 750	10.78 / /12.74 /14.70	650 / 750 / 850	12.74/ 14.70/ 16.66	6999 / 7999 / 8999	137.24/ 156.85/ 176.46
Amari Boulevard	550 / /650 /750	10.78 / /12.74 /14.70	550 / 650 / 800	10.78 / /12.74 /15.68	650 / 750 / 900	12.74/ 14.70/ 17.65	7500 / 8500 / 9500	147.03/ 166.63/ 186.24
Amari Watergate	750 / 850	14.70/ 16.66	770 / 870	15.09/ 17.05	860 / 960	16.86/ 18.83	9400 / 10400/ 12400	184.28/ 203.88/ 243.28
Century Park	560 / 600	10.97/ 11.76	600	11.76	640 / 700	12.55/ 14.72	6600 / 7200 / 7600	129.49/ 141.26/ 149.11
Grand Mercure Fortune	450 / 470 / 490	8.82/ 9.21 9.60	510 / 530 / 550	9.99/ 10.39/ 10.78	580 / 600 / 620	11.37/ 11.76/ 12.15	6000 / 6500 / 7500	117.64/ 127.45/ 147.05
Radisson	550 / 650 / 750	10.78 / /12.74 /14.70	600 / 700 / 800	11.76/ 13.72/ 15.68	650 / 750 / 850	12.74/ 14.70/ 16.66	7500 / 8500 / 9500	147.03/ 166.63/ 186.24
Swissotel Le Concorde Hotel	650 / 750	12.74/ 14.70	N/A	N/A	750 / 850	14.70/ 16.66	8500 / 9500	166.63/ 186.24
Novotel Lotus	450 / 480	8.82/ 9.41	500 / 530 / 550	9.80/ 10.39/ 10.78	550 / 600	10.78/ 11.76	4900 / 5300 / 5900 / 6900	96.14/ 103.99/ 115.76/ 135.32
Siam City	590 / 690	11.56/ 13.52	N/A	N/A	690 / 790	13.52/ 15.49	7900 / 8900	154.93/ 174.54
The Emerald Hotel	490 / 540	9.60/ 10.59	550 / 600	10.78/ 11.76	590 / 650	11.56/ 12.74	6600 / 7300 / 7800 / 8300	129.49/ 143.16/ 152.97/ 162.71
Intercontinental Hotel	640 / 740 / 840	12.55/ 14.51/ 16.47	N/A	N/A	800 / 890	15.68/ 17.45	9000 / 10000/ 11000	176.43/ 196.03/ 215.87
Holiday Inn Bangkok	640 / 740 / 840	12.55/ 14.51/ 16.47	N/A	N/A	800 / 890	15.68/ 17.45	9000 / 10000/ 11000	176.43/ 196.03/ 215.87
Chaophya Park Hotel	430	8.43	N/A	N/A	450 / 480 / 510	8.82/ 9.41/ 9.99	5,900	115.76
Rembrandt	N/A	N/A	630 / 680	12.35/ 13.33	630 / 680	12.35/ 13.33	6500 / 7000	127.45/ 137.40
The Grand Ayudthaya	490	9.60	580	11.37	560	10.98	6,800	133.48

Figure 7: Comparing table for wedding package price

**Exchange rate at June 13, 2008: 1 THB = 0.0196111 EUR*

For the paying method, the hotel accepts all major international credit cards are accepted i.e. American Express, Diners, Visa, Master Card, JCB, TFB, BBC. (Amari, 2008)

4.1.3.3 Place

The hotel participated in wedding exhibition every year, and also used the internet community channel through Wedding square website which is the popular website about wedding in Thailand. Moreover, other top wedding websites are also the hotel's channel of contact. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

As the hotel realized the fact that the internet channel is quite important nowadays, the official website of the hotel is www.amari.com/atrium. This website is fully with the information about the hotel, rate, etc. However, the website does not contain the information and the access link for the website visitors to get the information or contact sales staff about the wedding. (Amari, 2008)

The parking lot is available up to 316 cars including the valet parking service. (Amari, 2008)

4.1.3.4 Promotion

Currently, the hotel Co-promotion with special event management company, wedding organizer, wedding studio to promote a one stop service at the Amari Atrium Hotel to create an awareness campaign for secure this segment. Moreover, the hotel also coordinate with AHR (Amari Hotels and Resorts) to develop own wedding website and build up relationship with local wedding websites in order to create good image of the hotel on their wedding pages. In addition the hotel plan to re-organize regular functions, which have become a trademark for Amari Atrium Hotel such as in-house wedding fair, wedding charity, wedding cake competition, art exhibitions, Mingles' Anniversary party to create and launch new functions and ideas such as in-house convention fair etc. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Not only the way to promote the hotel, but also, for weddings business, the hotel plans to introduce a Thai – Chinese set menu that is sure to attract more wedding business, and will launch the “Atrium One Stop Service Campaign” into the local market as well as joining promotions with leading wedding studios as our long term partners. Further more with the help of the Amari Head office, the hotel will continue to develop the hotel image on popular Thai wedding website through various promotional activities. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Looking at the past success of previous wedding fair, the hotel will again organize one wedding fair in June 2008 in conjunction with the traditional Thailand wedding cake competition that has been successful for us since the past 5 years. Also in the wedding fair, the hotel usually launches the wedding package with the special promotion in each time. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Now most customer usually use the internet channel to check the comment about the hotel and other wedding services that other couples post in the community forum. Therefore, the salespersons communicate promotion to target customer mostly via our partner company in wedding business which now the hotel has tight relationship with “Tee Rak studio” to promote and joint “All in one package” program. All of the promotion will be posted the there company website including the hotel websites. Moreover, the hotel also has a plan to using the intranet system to sending the update

information about the promotion to the hotel's partner company. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

4.1.3.5 Physical Evidence

The general image of the hotel is to be international standards modern in outlook and design which the hotel has renovated some part of the hotel such as lobby area to be more modern style along with the soft refurbishing of the function room to be more contemporary which can be the high-light of the hotel. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Moreover, the cleanliness of the hotel is also concern as the most essential part. Nobody appreciate with the dust on the table and the bad smell of the air. Not only the house keeping is taking part of this duty, but every staff is concern. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

By keeping the reputation and the ranking, the hotel needs to consider about the indicators in the criteria of hotel standard of the Thai Hotels Association (2004), that they have done these things as the table provided below.

Criteria	Indicator
Location	Safe and convenient access
Sign or Symbol	Hotel sign or symbol, clearly presented in good condition and sufficiently lit during nighttime
Environment and General Construction	Has good, clean area or decorations in front of and around the hotel, with attractive lighting during nighttime General construction in good condition, clean and safe, with sufficient lighting during nighttime
.Toilets for Conference Room	Located in safe clean area and distance convenient for use without causing interference to conference area Separate men's and women's toilets Clean floors in good condition, not slippery with good drainage Clean walls and ceiling in good condition Clean door and sanitary ware in good condition Good air ventilation Sufficient light and well-lit Well decorated, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel Toilet area no less than 0.9. m. wide covering no less than 1.20 sq. m. Ceiling height no less than 2.40 m.

Figure 8: Hotel standard criteria table

Source: Based on Appendix IV: Standard framework for Tourism Accommodation

4.1.3.6 Process

For the wedding function, sales staff will take care of the bride and groom closely with special care from the first that they contact hotel for the function until they check out. Moreover, they can be the wedding planner for those who need the advisor. “We also suggest the couple when we see the problem or there are something missing because we want them to have the perfect wedding. Also, we control the script if every thing is on the track. We realize that the wedding function is so important; therefore, we will make sure of the coordination between the staff is done smoothly,” said Mr. Tatthanan. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

However, there is some limitation for the staff unique skills that may cause that the function design support is still lacking because sales staff are not directly the wedding planner. Actually the hotel can offer many things such as recommend the photographer, music, flower decorator, ice craving, etc. As stated by Mr. Tatthanan, “We are the consultant when they need and We will consult the problem with the customer from our previous experience and make sure that they will satisfy with the service we offer”. Moreover, the hotel can give the advisor as their friend to comfort the couple when they are nervous. The hotel also mentioned that they do not lie to the customer; therefore, this can build the trust and relationship between the customer and sales staff. The customer can be sure of the service we offer is already the best fit to them,” said Mr. Tatthanan. However, for the theme of the wedding ceremony, the staff still lack of the ability. Normally the couples contact the hotel with their design theme or consider the hotel as just the place for their wedding, but not for theme consultant. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Not only the complimentary shown in the table above, but also there is some additional value service provided to the customer such as setting up the honeymoon room for bride and groom such as decorate the bed with flowers, food serving before and after party, offer the room for dress up, function decoration as per requested, taking care of VIP guests or celebrity and promote the wedding (as per requested.) Now the hotel is looking for the limousine services provide for the bride and the groom which taking them from the bride’s house to the hotel. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

4.1.3.7 People

Since the hotel is providing the service to all value customers, the staff is taking the important role as a service provider. Not only the service providing, price, place, promotion, but also the staff attitude is important. As the hotel realized this matter of fact; therefore; the Asian Care and Amari Standard service is organized and provided to train the staff. Every staff member has to attend the Asian Care and Amari Standard service at least twice a year. The aim of this training is to gain the staff attitude which is friendly, caring and attentive staff create a very positive image of friendliness. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

After training, there is evaluation for those staff. To evaluating, there will be persons form the training department or another company called “Mystery Shopper” to check

if the staff member follow the standard or not by calling, inspection, and being guests. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Mystery Shopper is an assessment tool that helps you manage your operation and if it needs to be managed then it needs to be measured. The Mystery Shopper doesn't know the hotel's competition, staff and market area. Their job is to provide an unbiased, third party analysis of each call and situation. Moreover, they will provide a side-by-side analysis of the hotel and also comparing with other competitors. Then the management could know where the hotel stands in the rest of other competitors. Nevertheless, the mystery shopper will help the hotel to evaluate the assessment of the training that staff members have received, and they use that knowledge to put into practice. (Hoteltraining, 2008)

After the evaluation from the mystery shopper, or even from the training department, all the feedback will be sent to the director of each department and also the top management to show their staff performance. Hence, if there is any weakness found, they could solve the problem and improve it into the proper way. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

About the wedding function, sometimes customers need to customize the style of the function room, but the hotel does not have enough resources such as manpower and equipment. Another obstacle towards this issue is about the size of the room that the hotel can not customize the room too much. Therefore, the hotel choose to join the promotion "one stop service" with other wedding planner company to take care in each expert category instead. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

Since the hotel gets the four-star rank, there are some criteria judging the staff as the service provider. Hence, there are many aspects for considering about the service, only some related aspects will be discussed. For staff of every section, they concern about the properly dress, wearing name tag, having good personality, good manner and are friendly. Moreover, they need to be good in communication well in Thai and in foreign languages, comply with job responsibility, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel, providing information and helping relevant to job responsibility effectively. (Thai Hotels Association, 2004)

4.1.4 Wedding business unit

For the wedding function in Amari Atrium Hotel had dropped year by year in last 2- 3 years because of many reasons such as the high rates, less complimentary, high competition, the availability of the function rooms, or even the economic crisis, etc. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 18 April) However, recently the number of wedding function tends to grow up rapidly from year 2006 to 2008. In year 2008 even not the end of the year yet, the number of wedding functions are more than the whole year 2007 around 30 functions. And by the end of the year, the number will be increased certainly regarding there are still many couples in the tentative list. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 25 May)

In the past, the hotel only provided the wedding package to the couple. Recently, there is a fierce competition in the wedding market; therefore, the management

realized that the hotel should offer something more than just a wedding package. Moreover, the hotel will provide “one stop service” which recently the hotel cooperates with the wedding planner to gain more customers, build the hotel image, and increase the revenue. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

For the competitors, Amari Atrium Hotel faces with many competitors in the wedding business. Normally, the couple will choose the hotel regarding nearby their workplace or house where the guests can easily come. Also the price and the size of the function room in the hotel are important. The main competitors are Radisson Hotel, The Emerald Hotel, Swiss Hotel Le Concord, Imperial Queens Park Hotel, Grand Mercure Fortune Hotel, and other hotels along Ratchada road, Sukhumvit road, New-Petchburi road, etc. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 16 May)

4.2 Thailand environment factor

As mentioned in the theory chapter, in order to understand the external environment which comprise of opportunity and threat, three force of Kotler’s macroenvironment factors are important for ATH to investigate demographic, economic and cultural environment of Bangkok market.

4.2.1 Demographic environment

The study of demographic environment consists of human populations in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race, occupation and other statistics in order to understand customer behavior that differs with demographic variables. (Evans&Jamal&Foxall, 2006) The following information about the demographic environment consists of secondary data from reliable sources and the primary data that comes from survey.

Secondary data

- **Population and density**

From the statistic data gathering from National Statistic Office, the population of Thailand was 63,038,247 peoples. Considering to Bangkok city which is the target location of ATH customer, the population of people who living in Bangkok was 5,716,248 peoples and the population density that determined by the average number of people per square kilometer in Bangkok had the highest number at 3,628.69 persons per km².(NSO, 2006) According to CIA World Fact Book, the population growth rate in Thailand was declined from 0.87% in 2005 to 0.68% and 0.66% in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

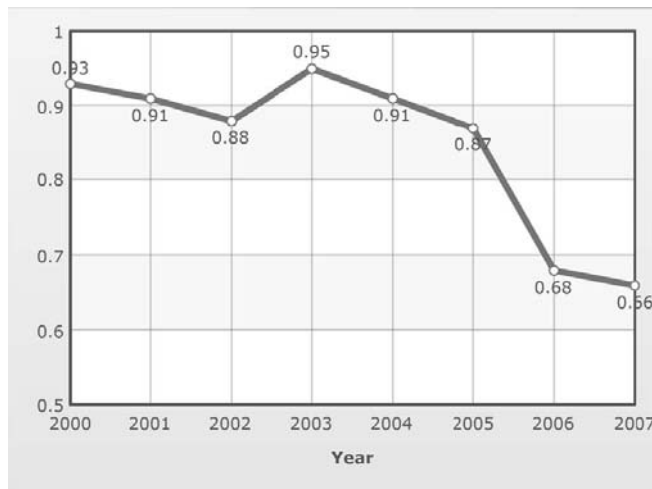


Figure 9: Thailand – Population growth rate (%)

Source: CIA World Fact Book

- Age

According to the statistic data about the group of couples who plan to marry, the most represented of these groups was come from younger age people. There were 69% of couple age between 25 and 30 years, 27% were the couple age between 30 and 35 years and the remaining 4% was older than 35 years. (Bangkok Biz week, 2008)

- Marriage statistic

From the statistic data, the number of marriage in Thailand illustrated that there is 307,910 couples register to Department of Provincial Administration in 2007 while the number of marriage in Bangkok counted for 45,132 couples. The statistic also showed that the registration number of marriage in 2007 was fall around 12% from 2549. (DPA, 2007)

Primary data

- Differ age range between couple

From the first part of questionnaire about the profile of respondents, the data showed the differ age between couples that 55.4% of respondents has different age between 1-4 years, 16% between 5-8 years, 4.2% between 9-12 years, 3.3% was the couple who has different age more than 13 years and the couple who was in the same age counted for 21%.

- Occupation

About the occupation of the couples, 61.5% of the groom and 60.09% of the bride are working for a private company, 15.02% of the groom and 14.08% of the bride are self-employment, 9.39% of the groom and 6.57% of the bride are working for the government organization 2.82% of the groom and 3.29 of the bride were student and only 2.35% of the bride and none for the groom were unemployment.

4.2.2 Economic environment

Secondary data

In 2006, the economic situation in Thailand was struck by the THAKSIN administration's political problems after the military coup took control over Thai Rak Thai's government in September and brought in a new economic team led by the former central bank governor. In December, the Thai Board of Investment reported the value of investment applications from January to November had declined by 27% year-on-year. (BOI, 2007) Even though domestic demand was ruthlessly destabilized by the high degree of political uncertainty in 2007, but the positive external balance helped to prop up the economy. (Economist Intelligent Unit, 2008) The formation of a democratically elected government in early 2008 has provided some scope for an improvement in consumer and business attitude, and there will be a shift back to stronger domestic demand growth. However, real GDP growth will slow to an annual average of 4.4% in 2008, down from 4.5% in 2007. (CIA, 2007)

According to the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO), Ministry of Finance, Thai economy in 2008 is forecasted to grow at 5.6 percent per year (in the range of 5.0-6.0 percent) which improving from 4.8 percent growth in 2007. Following a new government policy to stimulate the domestic economy, main economic driver is liable to come from recovery of domestic demand especially from the low-based private consumption and private investment in 2007 while external demand is likely to be softened from possible global economic slowdown. (FPO, 2008) As a result of higher real income from increasing trend in farmers' income following rising prices of agricultural products in the world markets and increasing wages and salaries in the public sector together with minimum wage increase, Thailand's private consumption in 2008 is expected to roses by 4.0 percent per year (in the range of 3.5-4.5 percent) that improving from 1.4 percent growth in 2007. (FPO, 2008) Furthermore, the new tax measures from new government policy (announced on 4th March 2008) is projected to increase disposable income of the people. (Government Public Relation Department, 2008)

From the economic fact explained above, the economic situation for year 2008 in Thailand predicts to improve from 2007. Moreover, with the government policy to rehabilitate Thai economy should boost up domestic consumption and private investment. Despite the internal stability in 2008 may have some risk with forecasting of headline inflation at 4.5 percent due to rising energy and food prices in the world markets. (FPO, 2008) However, the overall economic indicator will lead to a growing purchasing power for Thai people. Consequently, the overall factor directly indicated to Bangkok economic situation as it is the economic center of Thailand in a good sign of domestic consumption, public investment and the rise of purchasing power as well. The summary table of Thailand 2008 economic forecast is as follows:

	2006	2007	2008 <i>f</i>	
Major assumption			Average	Range
1) Average Economic Growth Rate of Major Trading Partners (percent y-o-y)	4.5	5.1	4.4	4.2-4.7
2) Dubai Crude Oil Price (US dollar per Barrel)	61.5	67.8	93.0	90.0-95.0
3) Exchange Rate (Baht /US dollar)	37.9	34.6	31.5	31.25-31.75
4) Economic Growth Rate (percent y-o-y)	5.1	4.8	5.6	5.0-6.0
5) Real Consumption Growth (percent y-o-y)	3.0	2.7	4.6	4.0-5.0
6) Real Investment Growth (percent y-o-y)	3.8	1.4	9.8	9.3-10.3
7) Headline Inflation (percent y-o-y)	4.7	2.2	4.5	4.3-4.8

f = forecast by Fiscal Policy Office, Ministry of Finance, Thailand

Figure 10: Thailand 2008 economic forecast

Source: FPO, 2008

Primary data

- Income

Regarding the survey data, the most significant number of income per month for respondents appeared that 33.47% of the groom has income/month around 30,000-39,999 baht while 31.46% of the bride has income/month between 10,000-19,999 baht.

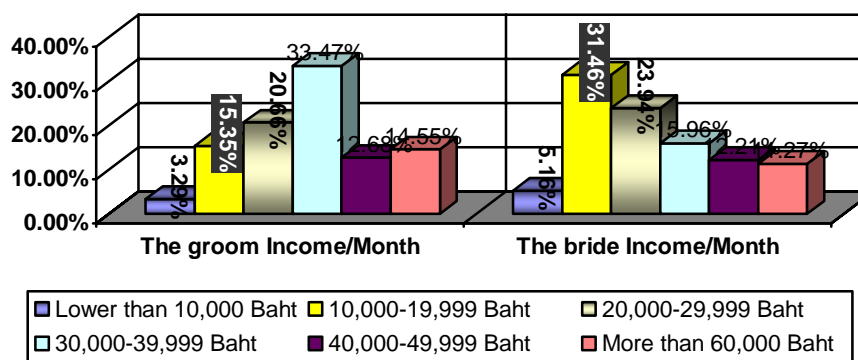


Figure 11: Percentage of the groom and the bride income/month

In addition, the result from survey data also illustrated that 53.0% of the respondents the groom has more income per month than the bride while 30.5% of the respondents showed that both of them has income in the same level (differ not over than 10,000 baht). Only 16.4% of the respondents appeared that the bride has more income/month than the groom.

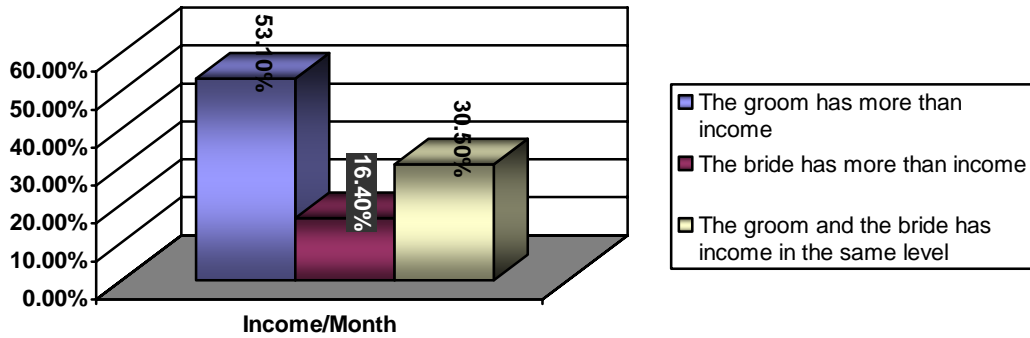


Figure 12: Percentage of respondents to justify the level of income/month between the groom and the bride

4.2.3 Culture environment

Secondary data

The Culture of Thailand is heavily influenced by Buddhism. Other influences have included of Hinduism, Chinese and Laos with the effected of the trade and past relation with Southeast Asian neighbors such as Laos and Myanmar as well as arrival of Chinese immigrants.

- Religion

Thailand is one of the most strongly Buddhist countries in the world. The national religion is Theravada Buddhism, a branch of Hinayana Buddhism, practiced by more than 90 % of all Thais. The remainder of the population adheres to Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and other faiths all of which are allowed full freedom of expression. Buddhism continues to cast strong influence on daily life. (TAT, 2007) Thai Buddhism is supported and overseen by the government, with monks receiving a number of government benefits, such as free use of the public transportation infrastructure. Thai culture is strongly influenced by Buddhism and traditional beliefs regarding ancestral and natural spirits, which have been incorporated into Buddhist cosmology. (The library of congress, 2005) Below is the statistic of religion in Thailand gathering from CIA World Fact Book of.

Buddhist 94.6%, Muslim 4.6%, Christian 0.7%, other 0.1% (CIA, 2007)



Figure 13: Thai Religion 2007

Source: CIA World Fact Book

- Ethnic

Ethnic Thais form the majority, though the area has historically been a migratory crossroads, and has thus produced a degree of ethnic diversity. Integration is such, however, that culturally and socially there is enormous unity. (TAT, 2007) A large majority of over 62 million citizens of Thailand are ethnic Thai, along with strong communities whose ethnic origins lie in China, India and elsewhere. About 6 million people reside in the capital city of Bangkok. (BMA, 2007) Below data is the statistic gathering from CIA World Fact Book about the ethnic group in Thailand.

Ethnic group: Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11% (CIA, 2007)



Figure 14: Thai Ethnic group 2007
Source: CIA World Fact Book

- Traditional of marriage

In general, Thai marriage ceremonies between Buddhists are generally divided into two parts: a Buddhist component, which includes the recitation of prayers and the offering of food and other gifts to monks and images of the Buddha, and a non-Buddhist component. The non-Buddhist portions of the wedding would take place away from the temple, and would often take place on a separate day. (Thaifolk, 2000)

However, in modern times, these practices have been significantly relaxed. While it may be as simple as the monks present for the Buddhist ceremony departing to take lunch once their role is complete in the same day. (Thaifolk, 2000)

Tradition of marriage has been highly important for Thai lifestyles and cultures. It indicates maturity of persons who are getting married, with more responsibilities and are ready to have a family. They must be responsible for more lives they would create and must act as a leader of the family. (Thaifolk, 2000)

With the social reasons, the Thai tradition of wedding is essential. The ceremony starts from the approach, then engagement, and finally the wedding. To be ceremonious, the ritual must be performed in the morning. The registration for marriage license must be carried out to make the wedding completed. The ceremony for dashing holy water and blessing is performed in the evening, at the same time as the welcome banquet for guests afterwards. To be economic, these activities can all be carried out in the morning. The welcome banquet can be hold at home, hotels, or clubs, depending on financial capability of the host. (Thaifolk, 2000)

The ritual wedding is important and appropriate because it represents prosperity of cultures and spirits of the society resulted from delicate mind of the perceptive Thai ancestors. At the same time, to suite Thai cultures and obey the law, the conditions for persons who are getting married are necessary. (Thaifolk, 2000)

- Changes in modern Thai lifestyle

Thailand is a country of scenic diversity and ancient traditions, of tranquil temples and modern urban excitement. In the Central Region, it can be found the evocative ruins of ancient Thai capitals and bustling Bangkok with its dynamic and countless pleasures. (TAT, 2007) Today, Bangkok the capital city of Thailand is a huge metropolis city which quickly outgrew its original walled center with high-rise buildings, air-conditioned shopping centers, and world-class luxury hotels. Despite its Western facade, however, Bangkok remains distinctively Thai, a fusion of modern and traditional, full of fascinating things to discover. (TAT, 2007)

In Bangkok, recently, it is the business area which contains every kind of business. Since the growth of the city; people tends to work more than the past. From this reason, it has changed the people's lifestyle that they have to do the hard work. As can be seen in nowadays, people in every working class tend to work harder and harder especially the ones who work in private companies and who have their own businesses. Their private lifestyles have been changed from time to time. Most of them go to work very early in the morning and back home very late at night. It seems they mostly spend their time at their workplaces. That means they have lessen time for their own private life. In addition, mostly, these people work for the private companies. Plus the insufficient transportation makes they would like to go home directly after work. (Bangkok Biz News, 2008)

Moreover, the IT world has rapidly grown currently. People connect each other trough communication technology more and more. Certainly, internet is the most part of the communication channel as people spend a lot of time for working. Therefore, recently, many companies try to combine everything at one place to offer the more convenience to their customer. For example, seven-eleven has arranged the "counter service" where customers can pay their bills there in order to reduce transportation time. (Bangkok Biz News, 2008)

Primary data

- Religion

According to the data gathering from survey, the data showed that 89.5% of the respondents adhere to Buddhism for both of the groom and the bride, 5.3% were Buddhist and Christian, 2.4% were Buddhist and Islam, 1.9% for both the groom and the bride adhere to Christian, only 1% for both of them adhere to Islam and none of the them were Christian and Islam.

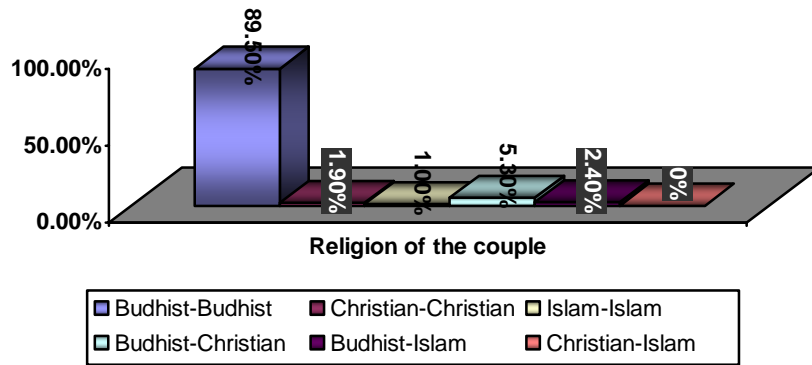


Figure 15: Percentage of wedding couples religion

- Ethnic

From the survey data, the ethnic of the respondents were considered both of the groom and the bride as well as the data from religion explained above. The data showed that 48.3% of the respondents were Thai for both the groom and the bride, 37.8% were Thai and Chinese, 9.1% were both Chinese, 4% were Thai and Western, 0.5% were both Western and the remaining 0.5% were Thai and Indian with none of the both the groom and the bride were Indian.

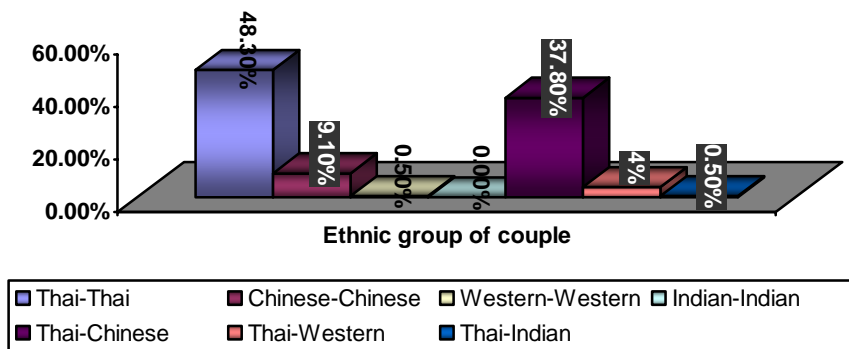


Figure 16: Percentage of wedding couples ethnic group

4.3 Wedding market in Bangkok

4.3.1 Market Structure

The wedding planner

This business was formed long time ago, but it became well known and popular in last 2-3 years. Normally, before this business was boomed, the bride and groom's relatives or friends took the role as an event organizer to take care of their wedding. Since they are not the professional in this business line, the mistakes often occurred. Therefore, from this reason, it is the starting point of the wedding planner business. (Thaiweddingmall, 2008)

In this business, for the starting up the company, it's quite important to have some amount of money for investment. It is approximately 1 million baht for the starting up. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) As nowadays wedding business has a high rate in competition, the player who has a large capital fund could gain advantage from using high technology to differentiate its product/service to propose customer. Though, this business needs high capital investment in order to survive and gain benefit from the market. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

The wedding planners usually use every marketing tool to access to their customer such as internet website, attending wedding fair, advertising, etc. Especially the starting time of the business, it is require high investment for marketing budget because it is quite difficult to get through the customer and promote the company to be known. Therefore, it takes sometimes to achieve the goal because this business is judged by the company's portfolio. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

Hence, most of the wedding planner companies usually use the internet channel to communicate with customers by giving them our company information. This channel is very popular among wedding companies in Thailand because this channel could approach directly to wider customers ay any level. However, it depends on each company strategy to get through the customers such as participate in wedding exhibition, using billboard or using internet advertising. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

Duties and responsibility

There is none fixed duties or responsibility for the wedding planners because it depends on the desire of each customer plus the skills and experience of the wedding planner. There is a definition of the wedding planner that the wedding planner is expert in booking services or products which concerning in the wedding ceremony. For example, the place, catering, music, make up artist, style of the wedding dress, theme of the ceremony and decoration, time management, script, photographer, wedding photo, wedding suite, invitation card, wedding souvenir, video recording, wedding consultant service, etc. (Thaiweddingmall, 2008)

This business needs wider knowledge about the market and specific technology to produce a product/service for customer. Moreover, it also needs high experience in ability to find and deal with the suppliers. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May) The wedding ceremony is very important to the couples' lives and it's only once in a live time; therefore, there is no wonder when the couples have high expectation toward the wedding planner to decorate their perfect wedding as a memorable day in their live. For this reasons, the wedding planner cannot have any mistake in the wedding function. This business is required the staff with modulate to high experience in this field.

Supplier

Normally, the wedding planner provides full wedding services for customers. Though, it is quite necessary to have a lot of suppliers in various kinds to fulfill our full services. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May) As the most wedding planner

company wants to be the one stop service; therefore, the wedding planners have to provide everything which the customers may need.

According to most of Thai people believe in good days, and sometimes the wedding planners have to set the wedding ceremony in the same day with many couples; hence, they need to have the suppliers enough for this kind of days. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

Moreover, it depends on company's capital fund. If the company has a large capital fund, it could provide full services for customers by themselves (vertical integration.) Conversely, if the company has not much capital fund the number of supplier and relationship with them is important for those companies. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

Since there are many suppliers available in the market, but the access to those suppliers who have the quality is quite hard. It depends on experience in this market and relationship of the company with suppliers. Less experience could make it harder for the wedding planner company to find quality suppliers to support them. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May) The wedding planner should strict with the quality of each suppliers, it takes some time for us to qualify them and make sure that they are suitable and meet the standard. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

The wedding planners have to make a good relationship and closeness with their suppliers to create trust between each other in order to reduce uncertainty. Moreover, they need an efficient communication skill between us and suppliers to bring out a good service to customers. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May) All the suppliers must have the unique skills and high experience. Once the customers contact our company, all the portfolios will be shown to them. Therefore, the suppliers need to remain the level of standardization. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

It is quite easy for the wedding company to get access to the suppliers since the number of suppliers in each category nowadays is quite huge. But the problem is how to select the suppliers who are efficiency and meet the company's standard set. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

The wedding planner company has some influences in helping the customer to choose the suppliers. Still, it depends on the service and product that the company proposes and present to customers. Actually, they usually show the success ceremony in our wedding portfolio to increase their confident in what they propose. Though, mostly customers who decide to use our consultant service almost trust in product/service proposed. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

4.3.2 Market trend

Nowadays the groom and the bride they are not have much time due to their job. To organize the ceremony, it takes a lot of works and details to do. Though, mostly the customer always decides to use the wedding planner service because it is easy for them and reduce their time to arrange the ceremony by themselves. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

The main factor which is influenced the customer decision making in selecting the wedding planner is the company's experience in the previous work together with the reliability of the wedding planner. The wedding planner has to taking care the budget of the couple which is large amount; therefore, it is necessary to select the company which the customer can rely on. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) Moreover, another factors could comes from the ceremony style and theme, the quality of the product and pricing that wedding planner propose to customers. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

In aspect of the profits for the customer of choosing the wedding planner, it is worth to purchase the service. Ms. Krissana said that he believes that having the professional in each wedding category to take care of the wedding function is better than have the couple do it by themselves. The wedding planner knows about the wedding more than the couples because they are working in this field and have many experiences. So they know what is important more or less in each ceremony, and plus the service that they provided to the customer all of which will make the perfect wedding ceremony as the best. Also, it reduces time for the couple to find the supplier themselves or even make it themselves. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) In addition, the profit that the customer would get from wedding planner service are the full product/service, one-stop-service that saving their time, the guarantee in quality of the ceremony and the budget saving. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

Between price and quality, the customers usually take both factors into the consideration before purchase the service. Actually there have both kinds of customer. However, the wedding planners need to understand the nature of the customer and give it back for what they need based on the quality and customer satisfaction. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) As it depends on the level of customers, if customers have sufficient budget, they are always looking to the quality of the work. But if customers have a limit budget, they will stick to the budget more than the quality. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

The modern wedding couples usually have a concept for their wedding ceremony. The idea of the concept comes from wedding couple reflecting of their own lifestyle and taste. Moreover, many colors included the taste of fun are often brought to their wedding ceremony. Therefore, from this point, the wedding planner or organizer is boomed. (Positioningmag, 2008)

Actually, the customers always have the alternative choice for selecting the wedding service. It is based on the criteria which the customer set in decision-making for selecting each wedding planner. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) In recent day, there are a lot of alternative choices and options for customers to select that depends on the information that customers could reach to product/service provider. If those product/service provider did not provide enough information or advertising what kind of product/service do they have, customers tend to find from another sources that provide the exactly product/service what they want. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

The reputation is important and effect to customer decision making. It is like the buzz network that friends recommend other friends or previous customers to use the company that they have experience before. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

The number of supplier is also affected to the competition in this market. The more you have the many choices offered, the more customers have a hard time to make decision. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

Ms. Krissana also said that in his opinion, there are many factors influences the customers' decision making in selecting the wedding planner. Firstly, I think it's about the past work experienced and portfolio. And certainly, it is reflected to the company's reputation. Moreover, the satisfaction of the customer toward the work and the individual in the company is also another effect. Or in other word, it means that the customer and the organizer is click on each other. And the last factor is the couple's budget in the wedding ceremony. Therefore, as stated by Ms. Krissana, the wedding planner has to manage the budget to achieve the maximum performance to both the customer and the company.

Nowadays this service is more necessary that the past due to the trend shift in capital city (Bangkok) lifestyle of Thai people that prioritize to their work more than other things. Though, wedding planner becomes as a favorable choice for couple to use the service. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

4.3.3 Current competition

This business has a high rate in competition, especially in the location in Thonglor. This location is a strategic location for this business which contains more than 20 shops of wedding studio (including wedding planner company as well). Around 50% of the competition in the market focuses at the medium and high level of customer. However the newcomers tend to come in this business quite hard because of the size of the company is quite small compared with the existing ones. (BusinessThai, 2008)

It is normal that every business must have the competitors including the existing one or the new comer; therefore, the wedding planners need to improve and develop their service quality to gain the comparative advantage or even the competitive advantage over the rivalries and maintain our position in the market. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) Consequently, a lot of new company or existing company shift from focusing on the quality to price cutter strategy that could bring it to a price war in the near future. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

Currently, there are many rivalries in this business. It is the same as other business which have the competitors. For the wedding planner business, if you can access to your customers easily, it means that you have the advantage over than competitors. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

This business is growing continuously. Moreover, a new technology and knowledge also adopt from foreign country to be use in this business also. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May)

Except from the other wedding company, there are still competitors in this industry. The wedding planner which is one stop service faces with competitors who are the other services provide for this market. However, those companies or freelances have less impact to the wedding planner company, but they are just like the obstacle for the company to access to the customer with the full range of service provider. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May) Moreover, there is some catering company jump from their main business to play in wedding market. They try to propose one-stop-service like wedding planner together with their catering service by proposing a package that includes the ceremony venue. (Kongwattanasupa 2008, pers. comm. 9 May) In addition, the internet website (wedding banner) can also be one of competitor as well since they held the list of suppliers where the customer can contact them easily. (K Udonpong 2008, pers. comm. 7 May)

Nowadays, there is a high competition between hotels in this wedding business. As every hotel realized that the wedding function could make high income, they try to gain as much the customers as they can. Therefore, there is a price cutter strategy over this competition. Every hotel tries to offer many complimentary plus lower price than competitor. (T Wechwongchai 2008, pers. comm. 18 May)

4.4 Consumer behavior toward the wedding services

This part will show the data that gathering from second part of survey about the consumer behavior toward the wedding services. At this part, some question the respondents could give more than one answer which caused the percentage of the answer rise above 100. And in some question the respondent should give the rank towards the choices of the answer.

Most of the respondents collected the information about wedding from Internet (87.5%). The experience couples were counted for 66.5% for the respondents to finding and asking for wedding information while the wedding magazine and wedding exhibition counted for 56.8% and 45.5% respectively. The other sources of information were come from wedding planner (16.5%), radio (1.7%) and television (5.7%) played a minor role for the couples.

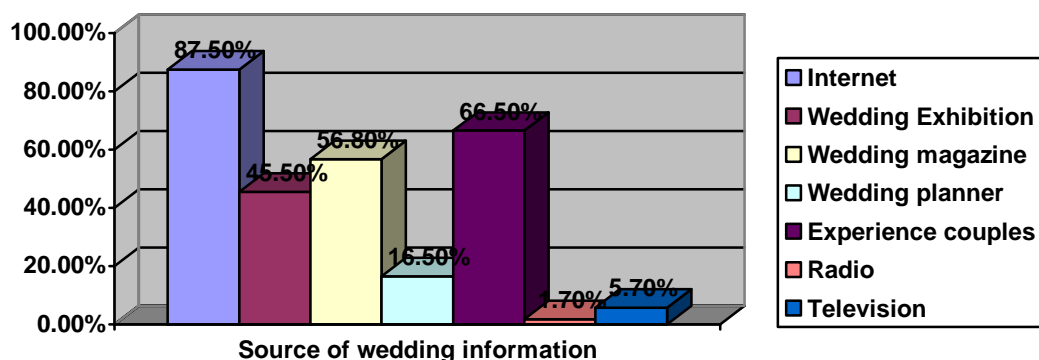


Figure 17: Percentage of wedding couples for wedding information source of finding

Considering the source of information that influences to the purchasing decision of couples, the most influences source that rank in 1st place was internet with the best

score of 5.73 follow by 2nd place experience couples (5.39), 3rd place wedding magazine (4.7), 4th wedding exhibition (3.83), 5th place wedding planner (3.57) and the least influences sources were television and radio which rank in 6th and 7th place respectively.

Rank	Most influences source	Score
1 st	Internet	5.73
2 nd	Experience couples	5.39
3 rd	Wedding Magazine	4.70
4 th	Wedding exhibition	3.83
5 th	Wedding planner	3.57
6 th	Television	2.92
7 th	Radio	2.07

Figure 18: Ranking table of the most influence source for wedding couples

From the result of survey about influence person for purchasing decision in wedding services, the couples are not easily to be influenced by the other since they choose to make their own decision placed in 1st rank at 4.15 scores follow by parents in 2nd rank (3.35), experience couples in 3rd rank (3.10), friends in 4th rank (2.45) and wedding planner which rank in the last place (2.1) play a minor role in purchasing decision for couples.

Rank	Most influence person for choosing wedding services	Score
1 st	Make own decision with couple	4.15
2 nd	Parents	3.35
3 rd	Experience couples	3.10
4 th	Friends	2.45
5 th	Wedding planner	2.10

Figure 19: Ranking table of the most influence person for wedding couples

For the most important criteria for choosing wedding services, the couple respondents concerned mostly in the budget to spend for their ceremony counted for 40.8%. The quality of services also play as one of the important criteria with 34.8% ticked by respondents follow with the recommend from other and reputation of product/service provider at 13.6% and 10.8% respectively.

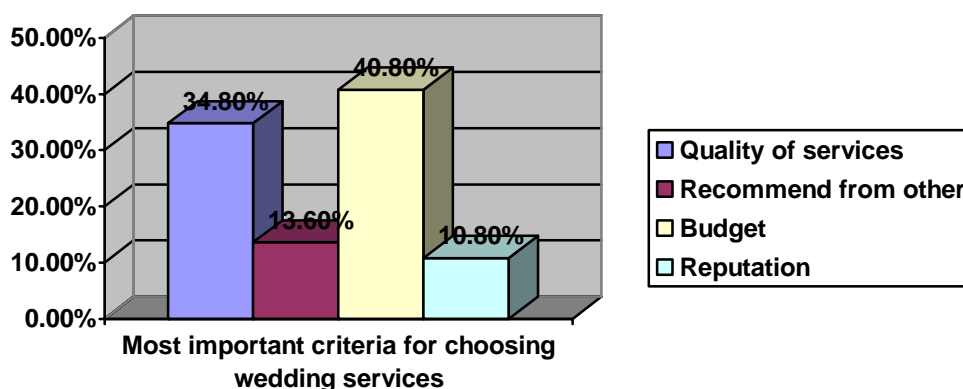


Figure 20: Percentage of the most important criteria for choosing wedding product/service

Regarding the important part for wedding ceremony, the data illustrated that the venue for wedding ceremony (9.77) is the most important part which rank in 1st place among the others. Following by sequence for wedding ceremony (7.59), food & beverage (7.53) and wedding suite (7.30) ranked in 2nd, 3rd and 4th place in this chart. Theme for wedding ceremony (6.30) which ranked in 5th place is one part that wedding couples concerned as well. Finally, music (3.48) and wedding cake (2.70) is the least important part for wedding ceremony.

Rank	Most important part for wedding ceremony	Score
1 st	Function for ceremony	9.77
2 nd	Sequence for ceremony	7.59
3 rd	Food & Beverage	7.53
4 th	Wedding suite	7.30
5 th	Theme	6.30
6 th	Wedding photo	6.20
7 th	Beauty makeup	5.73
8 th	Card & Souvenir	5.64
9 th	VDO & Slide presentation	3.97
10 th	Music	3.48
11 th	Wedding cake	2.70

Figure 21: Ranking table of the most important part for wedding ceremony

About the question towards the opinion of the respondents about wedding planner, 52.8% of the respondents believe that wedding planner necessary for them in order to organize the wedding ceremony while 47.2% does not believe that wedding planner necessary for them.

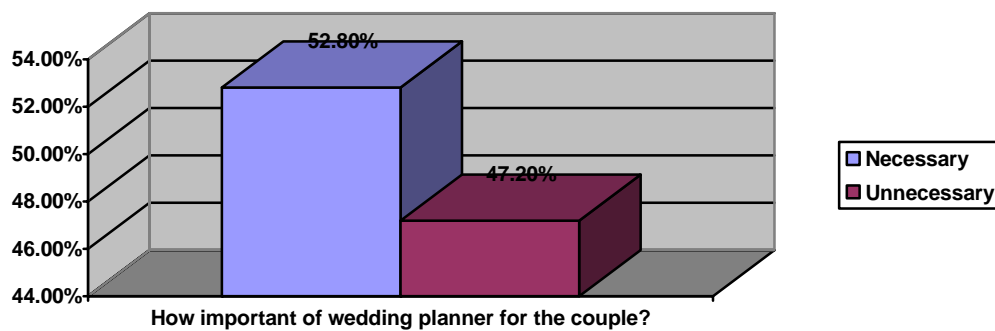


Figure 22: Percentage of respondents towards the important of wedding planner

About the budget for wedding ceremony, 46.6% of couple respondents has budget for their ceremony between 200,000 and 400,000 Baht, 22.7% of couple respondents has budget lower than 200,000 Baht and 18.8% of couple respondents has budget between 400,000 and 600,000 Baht. There are a rarely number of couple respondents has budget between 600,000 and 800,000 Baht at 8.5% and only 3.4% of respondents has budget more than 1 million Baht.

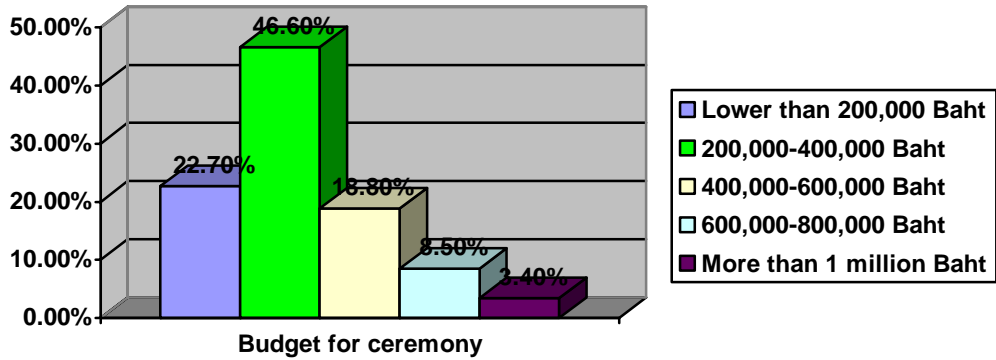


Figure 23: Percentage of respondent budget setting for wedding ceremony

In addition, the survey data also illustrated that mostly of the wedding couples share cost of their wedding ceremony between the couple and their parents (39.2%) and 37.5% of the respondents willing to share cost of wedding between them (couple) only.

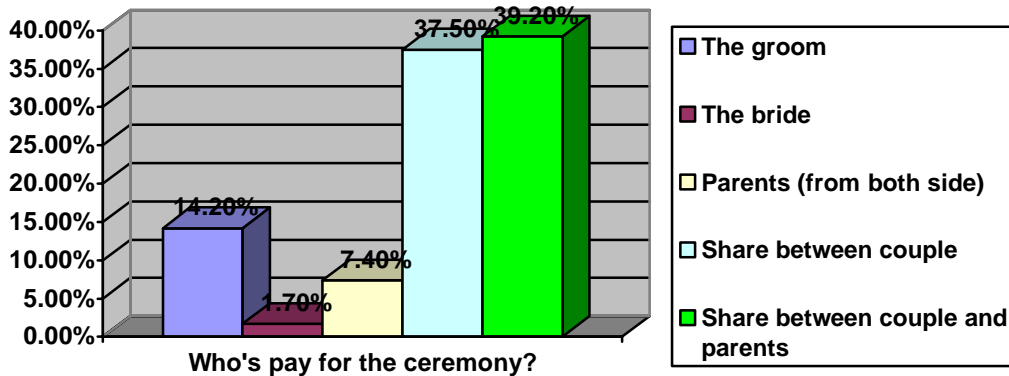


Figure 24: Percentage about the persons who pay for the cost of wedding ceremony

Toward the question about “What kind of payment method that you prefer to pay for your wedding ceremony?” most of respondents prefer to pay for their wedding ceremony by credit card (47.7%) following with the loan method provide by credit card provider (17.2%), cash (16.9%) and paying by half-half between cash and credit card (10.8%). While paying by debit card (7.4%) has the least significance number among the other.

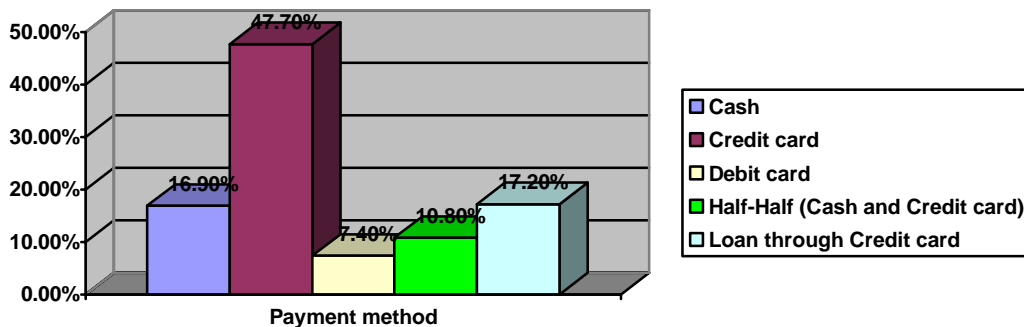


Figure 25: Percentage of respondents payment method

The statistic result from survey illustrated that 83.5% of the respondents preferred to arrange both traditional and non-traditional together in their wedding ceremony follow by just 9.7% and 6.8% of the respondents preferred to organize only traditional ceremony and non-traditional ceremony respectively.

4.5 Influences of marketing mix towards wedding services

The data gathering from part three of survey questionnaire tried to find out the degree of important in marketing mix that influences wedding couples on the purchasing decisions. The answer count for a mark, from the most important having a five point to not important having one point. In order to compare the important of each mix we will use the weight-mean to calculate the average score. A higher score represents a more important influence to the purchasing decision of wedding couples.

According to the survey data, the following table show the average score separated by marketing mix of services.

Marketing Mix	Average Score
People	4.68
Price	4.51
Product	4.31
Physical evidence	4.15
Process	3.99
Promotion	3.79
Place	3.25

Figure 26: Average score of the level of importance towards marketing mix for services

Product

The following table shows the important of each element of the product in marketing mix. The most important for product in wedding services is the quality of the function room (4.76) while the quality (4.66) and quantity (4.51) of food & beverage also consider as one of the important thing in wedding ceremony. In addition, about creative wedding theme (4.42) for wedding ceremony also is one of the essential factor that wedding couple also concerned as well as variety choice of food and beverage (4.30). Considering the reputation of service provider towards opinion of respondents, it seems that reputation (4.00) factor has the least important level among the other factors for product.

Product	Score
Quality of the function room	4.76
Quality of food and beverage	4.66
Quantity of food and beverage	4.51
Quality of other product & service (music, wedding suite & cake, etc.)	4.55
Creative wedding theme	4.42
Variety choice of food and beverage	4.3
Quality of equipment provide in function room	4.26
Size of function room	4.18
Variety choice of other product & service (variety choice of music, variety choice of wedding suite & cake, etc.)	4.15
Number of equipment provide in function room	4
Variety type of function room (indoor, outdoor, etc.)	3.99
Reputation of service provider	3.99

Figure 27: Table score for level of the importance towards product element

Price

About the pricing, wedding couple mostly concerned on a reasonable price base on quality of the product & service (4.7.9) following with reasonable price compare to a full product & service (4.69), price elasticity and negotiability (4.51) is also one of the important things. Finally, payment option (4.47) and lower price than other competitors (4.12) are the least important factor in the opinion of respondents.

Price	Score
Reasonable price with quality of product & service	4.79
Reasonable price with full product & service provide	4.69
Price elasticity and negotiability	4.51
Payment option	4.47
Low price than other competitor	4.12

Figure 28: Table score for level of the importance towards price element

Place

The most important for wedding couples towards the place is car parking facility (4.18) following with good location to get access to the wedding ceremony venue

(3.89). Most preferable for channel of contact is Internet (3.45) follow by phone (2.99), sales person (2.73) and the least preferable agent company (2.34).

Place (Channel of contact)	Score
Enough car parking facility	4.18
Good location to get access (easy access by sky-train or underground)	3.89
Contact via Internet	3.45
Image and decoration	3.23
Contact via Phone	2.99
Contact via Sales person	2.73
Contact via Agent company	2.34

Figure 29: Table score for level of the importance towards place element

Promotion

For the promotion, sales person with good advises (4.45) play an important role for respondents while sale promotion (4.3) and variety of promotion & package (4.23) offering also important for them too. The lesser important towards the promotion is promotion offer in wedding exhibition (3.34) and public relation that create good image (3.40) while the least important is public relation that direct access to customers (3.25).

Promotion	Score
Sales person with good advise	4.45
Sale promotion	4.3
Variety of promotion & package offering	4.23
Promotion & Package in wedding exhibition	3.34
Public relation that create good image	3.4
Public relation that direct access to target customer	3.25

Figure 30: Table score for level of the importance towards promotion element

Physical evidence

The most important about the physical evidence is cleanliness of the venue for wedding ceremony (4.72). After that wedding couple also cares about pleasant atmosphere of the venue and function room (4.62), decoration (4.50), appropriate light (4.48) of the function room and convenient & comfortable facility (4.26). The lesser important factor for physical evidence are romantic atmosphere of venue & function room (4.12) and good sign direction (3.42). Luxury atmosphere of the venue and function room (3.12) were considered as the least important in decision making.

Physical evidence	Score
Cleanliness of the venue and function room	4.72
Pleasant atmosphere of the venue and function room	4.62
Decoration of the function room	4.5
Appropriate light of the function room	4.48
Convenient and comfortable facilities (toilets, table at public hall, elevator, etc.)	4.26
Romantic atmosphere of the venue and function room	4.12
Good signs and symbols direction	3.42
Luxury atmosphere of the venue and function room	3.12

Figure 31: Table score for level of the importance towards physical evidence element

Process

Towards the process element, cooperation between customer and organize persons (4.65) were the most concerned for respondents during the wedding ceremony. Following with well organize of ceremony sequence (4.55), well organize of ceremony sequence (4.42), readiness of function room and facility (4.41), and well organize on specific extra service by request (4.34) is also the important factor for them. The least important thing is the service evaluation after event (3.33) and bill issue ready after event (3.22) rank in the last place.

Process	Score
Cooperation between customer and organize persons	4.65
Well organize of ceremony sequence	4.55
Readiness of service provider	4.42
Readiness of function room and facilities	4.41
Well organize on specific extra service by request	4.34
Well organize of necessary equipment and facilities	4.29
Procedure and documentation for reservation	3.88
Bills are easy to audit	3.5
Thank you process for using service	3.4
The follow up of service evaluation after event	3.33
Bills are ready after event	3.22

Figure 32: Table score for level of the importance towards process element

People

The last element is about the people. The most important factor is the willingness & attention of the staff (4.85) follow by the ability to solving problem (4.80) that both rank in “very important” level. In addition, specialize know how to give an advice and the ability to coordinate consider to be in “very important” also (4.75) as well as professionalism (4.71). The least important is good looking and nice uniform of the staff (4.11).

People	Score
Willingness and attention of the staff (service mind)	4.85
Ability to solving problem	4.8
Ability to coordinate with all related persons	4.75
Professionalism	4.75
Specialize know how to give an advice	4.71
Courtesy and politeness	4.7
Good looking and nice uniform	4.11

Figure 33: Table score for level of the importance towards people element

5. Analysis

5.1 SWOT Analysis

5.1.1 Internal factors analysis

Strengths

Considering about the strengths, from the table explained in the theoretical framework, there are many strengths hotel has toward the wedding business. First of all, considering about the location and geographical, the location of the hotel is easy access to subway (MRT) and express way which are convenient provide variety choices of transportation for the guest to come to the hotel.

Moreover Amari Atrium Hotel located on New Petchburi road which is a commercial and residential area. This location also situated nearby other prime business and residential area such as Sukhumvit road, Silom road and Thonglor road. As an interview with Mr. Tatthanan that some couples tend to select the hotel where nearby their office or house to set up their wedding ceremony. Therefore, by the location in a commercial and residential area could give be one advantage for the hotel.

Another aspect of the strengths that the hotel has, according to the hotel facilities, the hotel's parking lot is provided space about 316 cars which adequate compare to the number of guests that hotel could obtain.

In addition, for the function room, the hotel has variety choices up to 7 function rooms with a high quality of operating equipment and maintenance standard. These function rooms are flexible to combine and separate to contain guests from 20 guests up to 250 guests.

About the service provided, since there is only one function room that could contain guests more than 100 persons, the wedding ceremony can be set once at a time. Though, all staff could focus to provide a good service to customers.

Moreover, all staff is well trained by participating in Asian care and Amari standard service every twice a year to gain friendly, caring and attentive staff attitude all of which is created a positive image for the hotel. The hotel provides high quality of services continuously by having the internal evaluation and mystery shopper to investigate the staff performance. The hotel dedicated sales staff to organize the wedding ceremony closely with special care.

In the marketing aspect, the hotel has a variety package and promotion for wedding couples to select. Moreover, the hotel also cooperated with its partners to provide a one-stop-service for wedding couples. Also, the hotel has an additional value service provided to the customer such as setting up the honeymoon room for bride and groom such as decorate the bed with flowers, food serving before and after party, offer the room for dress up, function decoration and limousine services provide for the bride and the groom which taking them from the bride's house to the hotel.

Weaknesses

As stated above in the strength part that the hotel has an advantage about situated on New Petchburi road; whereas, there is a disadvantage also. Since the location of the hotel situated on New Petchburi Road the center of Bangkok, though, this location has a bad reputation for crowded traffic and also perceived by local residents as a “less preferred location”. Therefore, for some people who have to travel along this road, they have to take a second-thought if they could avoid it.

For the function room of the hotel, there is only one function room that could contain more than 100-250 persons. Therefore it still has a limitation that unavailable to contain number of guests over 250 persons (for formal dinner).

Moreover, in the aspect of staff, even sales staff of the hotel has some special knowledge and experience about wedding services, but they still lack in some unique skill such as theme decorator and function design to provide a full consultant services as professional wedding planner. Moreover, sales person has no special knowledge and experience about wedding service in order to give a good advice for wedding couples.

5.1.2 External factors analysis

Opportunity

The Bangkok wedding market value is growing from 3,000 million from 2006 to 5,000 million in 2007 while the economic forecast in 2008 predicted to recover that affected in a good way of more domestic demand consumption during this year.

As mentioned in finding part, the most represented of wedding couple was come from younger group that their opinion about wedding ceremony has shifted from a normal setup to concerned more about the creative theme and concept of their wedding to create more fun to their ceremony. It means that the total value for setup wedding ceremony supposed to increase due to the increasing of adding product/service.

The trend of wedding market shift from standalone product/service to one stop service as the groom and the bride has less time to take care it all and the complexity in organize the ceremony by themselves.

With a lifestyle of Thai people who living in Bangkok shifted to have less time to travel in rush hour because of the traffic jam. Though, the wedding couples tend to choose the location for their ceremony nearby the center of Bangkok or easy to get access by local transportation.

Current market trend in Thailand wedding market from the survey questionnaire showed that Internet play an important role to be the most source that wedding couples usually find the information from Internet. Though, Internet was the useful channel to communicate directly with customers. Moreover, Internet is also the most

influences source toward the purchasing decision of wedding couples regarding to the survey data.

Threats

Considering the competition situation in Thailand market, there is a high competition for this market due to a lot of new comer and crowded of rivalry. Then many players in this market tend to use price cutting strategy to compete with each other more than in the past.

Except from a high competition situation in this market, another threat factor was come from new competitors that transform the related business to played in wedding business.

Even the economic overview sounds to improving from 2007, but some economic indicator such as the rising of inflation rate and energy prices showed that Thailand economic still not stable during the year 2008 which effected to the ability of new comer to compete with the existing company in wedding market. As well as, decreasing of marriage statistic in 2007 from the previous year considered to be a threat for new comer.

Another threat is about the market structure of wedding business, new comer who needs to enter in this market require to has a broad knowledge and past experience in this market in order to compete with other existing players.

As well as the threat mention above, in order to expand to full wedding service by oneself, the high capital fund, experience and knowledge are required. Otherwise, the company has to find suppliers to support. However there are many suppliers in the market, to find the quality and experience suppliers is rather hard if the company does not have much experience about this market.

5.2 Market segmentation

5.2.1 List who buys

Demographics

From theoretical framework, in consumer service market, demographics refer to number of sex, age, family size, professional and etc. The following part will analyze which target customers segment by demographic using the empirical finding from the survey.

Age

From the secondary data, it is shown that group of wedding couples who plan to get married mostly from the younger age people (between 25 to 30 years old). Moreover, regarding to the primary data from the survey, the age difference of the couple mostly is 1 – 4 years difference which could be in percentage at 55.4% of respondents.

As the result, as stated above, mostly the target couples are in the younger age, and the age of the bride and groom are not much different. At this point, the groom and the bride consider to having a similar opinion, lifestyle, and trend as they are in the same generation.

Occupation

According from the survey, mostly both of grooms and brides are working for the private company at 61.5% of the grooms and 60.09% of the brides. As they are working in the private company, mostly they spend their time for working, and have less time to deal with their private lives including the managing of their wedding ceremony.

Socioeconomic

Socioeconomic will be analyzed regarding to the income levels and ethnic origins as following.

Income levels

According to the survey, the grooms have higher income than the bride at 53.1% of total respondent; whereas, the average income per month for the groom is 30,000 – 39,999 Baht. Besides, mostly the bride has less average income per month at 10,000 – 19,999 Baht. It is can be considered that the target of the wedding couple has medium-power of purchasing that can spend money for their wedding ceremony.

Ethnic origins

The data from the surveys are shown that 48.3% of the respondents are Thai for both bride and groom; while, the couples who are Thai-Chinese have significant number at 37.8% of the total respondents. From the less different number between these two of ethnic groups, it is can be said that they are from both Thai-Thai, and Thai-Chinese. Both of these groups are considered as the target customer.

Psychographics

At this point, Psychographics concerns with people's behaviors and lifestyles which the budget for ceremony, person influenced purchasing decision, attitude toward wedding planner,

Budget for ceremony

Mostly the respondents have the budget for their wedding ceremony at 200,000 – 400,000 Baht. Meanwhile, the budget for settle the wedding ceremony mostly sharing between the groom and bride with their parents.

Person influenced purchasing decision

Toward the attitude for couple to choosing the wedding service, the purchasing decision is made majority by their own decision of wedding couples at the first rank.

It is also shown that other persons are not easily influence to the couples' decision, except from their own parents' opinion that has a significant number ranked in the second place according to the survey result.

Attitude toward wedding planner

Considering the attitude toward the wedding planner, 57.2% of the total respondents think that the wedding planner is important for their wedding ceremony; whereas, 42.8% of the total respondents have difference opinion.

Geographic

According to the Amari Atrium Hotel is located in the commercial and residential area in Bangkok, it is obviously that the target customers of the hotel are the couple who lives in Bangkok.

Moreover, from the interview, it is shown that the couple chooses the location for their wedding ceremony which situated nearby their house or workplace.

5.2.2 List what is bought

As per the interview, the wedding services provide many kinds of service and product regarding the wedding ceremony such as the venue, catering, music, make up artist, style of the wedding dress, theme of the ceremony and decoration, time management, script, photographer, wedding photo, wedding suite, invitation card, wedding souvenir, video recording, wedding consultant service, etc.

Meanwhile, from the survey, the venue of the wedding ceremony is considered as the most important factor for the couple, followed by the sequence of the ceremony.

Considering this fact, the list of service and product as mentioned above is necessary for their wedding ceremony for those target customers.

5.2.3 List where target customer bought

As the wedding planners use every marketing tool to promote their service and catch up with their target customer such as internet websites, attending the wedding fair, advertising, etc.

From the survey, the data illustrated that most influence source that couples usually find the information about the wedding service is the internet channels, and followed by the experience couples in the second rank.

5.2.4 List when target customer bought

The list of when they bought is concerning about the frequency of the purchasing. For the wedding business, the couple mostly buy only once in their life as the fact that they get married only once unless additional group of people.

5.2.5 List how target customer bought

In general, couples prefer to pay by the normal payment such as credit card, debit card, cash, half cash and half credit card, and loan. According to the survey, the data shown that mostly the total respondents are willing to have the payment method by credit card. Moreover, another popular payment method that wedding couples also consider as one of their payment option is loan payment provide by credit card provider.

Segment name	List
Who buys	
- Demographic	- Younger age couples - Working for private company
- Socioeconomic	- Have both Thai and Chinese ethic - Medium power purchase (income between 20,000 – 39,999 Baht/month)
- Psychographic	- Have budget around 200,000-400,000 Baht - Make their own decision making with a little influence from their parents - Think that wedding planner is necessary
- Geographic	- Couples who live in Bangkok
What is bought	- All product/service related in wedding ceremony - Venue/place for wedding ceremony is the most important
Where target customer bought (Channel)	- Mostly find and bough product/service from Internet - Wedding exhibition is the second channel that couples also find for the information and buy product/service
When target customer bought	- Once couples have plan to marry - Bought only once in a life time
How target customer bought	- Mostly pay by Credit card

Figure 34: Table of market segmentation criteria list for Amari Atrium Hotel

5.3 Analysis of marketing objective

According to the marketing planning theory, the Ansoff matrix is used to analyze the possibility of strategic direction for setting the marketing objective.

The graph shows below illustrate that there are four courses of action concerned in this matrix.

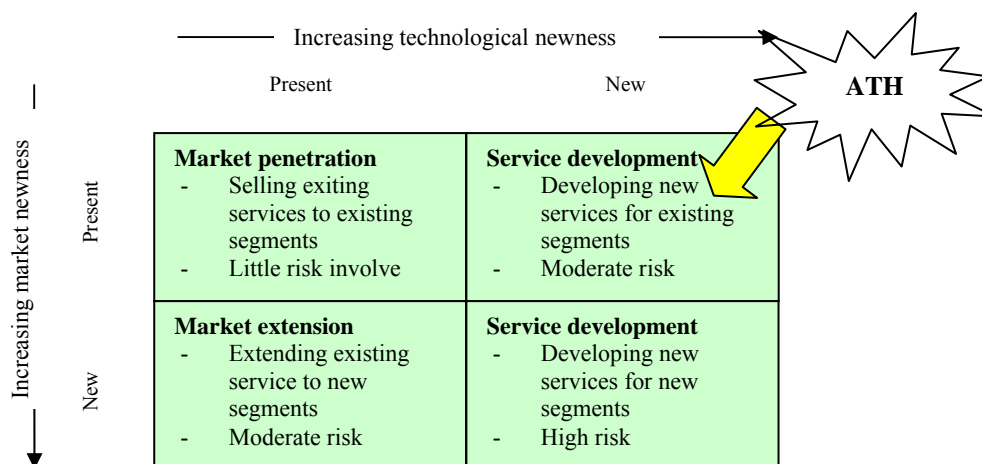


Figure 35: Ansoff matrix – ATH position

Considering to the market aspect, ATH mainly concern about the room accommodation, in the meantime, the hotel also provide in many kind of service such as meeting, restaurants, including the wedding service. As the Amari Atrium Hotel did not start business with the wedding, hence, more than ten years since the hotel established, providing the wedding venue and service came as the second place after the selling room accommodation. What is more, when the wedding market boomed, the hotel realized the fact of the growth market, and they continue building up the relationship with the leading wedding companies. By this time, the hotel gain some knowledge and experience about the wedding business. All of these evidences show that the wedding market for the hotel has less degree of newness. Though, according to the Ansoff matrix, the wedding business for Amari Atrium Hotel is considered to be in the present market quadrant.

Regarding to the hotel existing service for wedding, the hotel provides the wedding package such as food, floral decoration, wedding garlands, glistening ice sculptures, room accommodation, and other service. However, there is fierce competition in the wedding market including the growth of the market; the management of the hotel has considered coping with this situation by planning to extend their service on wedding to be “the one stop service.” At this point, the degree of newness in one stop service that the hotel planed to launch is considered to be as a new service quadrant.

As regard of the Ansoff matrix, the wedding business of Amari Atrium Hotel is considered to be in the service development phase as shown in the graph above.

The analysis of this part will consider together with mission and corporate objective of the hotel and external and internal factor in order to setting the marketing objective for Amari Atrium Hotel for the new wedding service.

5.4 Analysis of Marketing Mix toward Wedding Services

According to the survey, in the marketing mix, couples are considering about the people (4.68) as the first place of importance level, and followed by price (4.54), product (4.34), physical evidence (4.15), process (3.99), promotion (3.70) and place (3.25) ; therefore, our analysis will rank the factors followed by the importance rank.

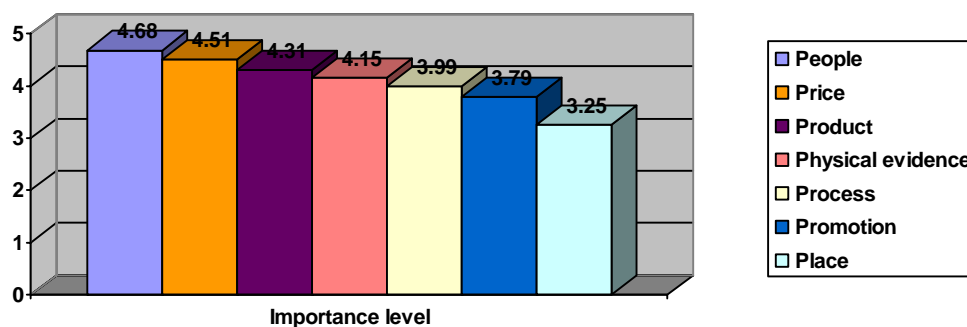


Figure 36: Graph comparing the importance level of marketing mix for services

5.4.1 People

In perspective of the wedding couple, people element is the most important among other elements of marketing mix for services. From the interview, since the staff is playing an important role as the service provider, the hotel gives the priority to the staff attitude and performance as one of the most important factor. They need to maintain their staff service quality as all times according to the evaluation from internal and mystery shopper. By achieving this goal and mission statement, “*the place where exceeding the guest expectation*”, all the staff should attend the training conducted by the training department, Asian Care and Amari Standard Service at least twice a year.

Considering factor that is the most influence of the people element is the willingness and intention of the staff (service mind). At this point, related to the point of view of the hotel that gives the high priority to staff attitude which is friendly, caring and attentive staff created a positive image of friendliness. In an aspect of the ability to coordinate with all related persons which is one of the 3rd rank important factors, the hotel assures that the coordination between staff and key person is done smoothly as they realized that the wedding function is very important.

Anyways, even hotel provide a good training and maintaining the service quality of their staff, but the ability to solving problem factor depend on the previous experience of each staff. As well as the professionalism level of the staff, the more they face the problems, the more they can increase their ability to be professionalism.

About the specialize know how to give an advice which is consider as of another “very important” , as mentioned by Mr. Tatthanan, an Assistant Director of Sales (corporate), the staff is still lacking of some unique skill to support the wedding function such as creating theme of the ceremony and ability to organize and planning for wedding ceremony. In addition, he also indicated that the hotel chooses to join a co-promotion with other wedding planner to take care in each expert category instead.

5.4.2 Price

Pricing is the second important element of marketing mix which wedding couples determined when they make a decision on wedding product/service. Related to the

result from survey, the reasonable price with quality of product and service as well as the full product and service provided are the most important factors for the couples toward the pricing of wedding service. According to the interview of ATH, comparing the price between other 4-star hotel competitors for wedding package, the price for the Amari Atrium Hotel is considered as the medium level price.

Considering about the price elasticity and negotiability which is one of the important factor of pricing element, the price set regarding the wedding ceremony package of the hotel supposed to be flexible to adjust in order to fit with the budget of wedding couple. Related to the survey questionnaire about the consumer purchasing behavior, the couples consider about the budget as the most important criteria in choosing the wedding products/services together with the importance level of marketing mix that pricing rank in the second place. Since the Amari Atrium Hotel is a hotel chain, not individual, it is quite hard for the hotel to played with other competitors with price cutting strategy because the hotel can not offer too much lower price and high complimentary. Anyway, the lower price of product and service than competitor has less impact toward the decision-making of the couples.

Another factor concerned about pricing is payment option that rank in “very important” level as other factors. Furthermore, the most preferable choice of payment method is credit card following with loan provide by credit card provider. For ATH, the hotel also accepts a various kind of all major international credit cards i.e. American Express, Diners, Visa, Master Card, JCB, TFB, BBC. Anyway, there is no option towards a loan method provided by ATH.

5.4.3 Product

Regarding the survey, product is the third important towards the wedding couple decision. The data illustrated that wedding couples mostly think that the quality of the function room is the most important part for their ceremony. According to the empirical data from interview, the function rooms of ATH are newly refurbished and renovated with more modern style. The new function rooms also accommodate up to 400 persons for the cocktail party and 250 persons for the formal dinner, and can be divided into three large function rooms using soundproof partitions. With a high ceiling, the ballroom is tastefully decorated using Thai fabrics and wood paneling and is perfect for weddings, multi-vision presentations and special events.

Considering about the quality of the food and beverage, from the hotel side, they indicate that food and beverage provided for customer were chosen with the high quality of ingredient. Anyways, about the taste of the food and beverage depends on each customer perception which hotel needs more information from evaluation in order to develop or maintain their quality of food and beverage.

For the quantity of the food and beverage, the hotel normally have 10% spare of food and beverage more than the amount guaranteed in case of the guests come more than they have guaranteed with the hotel.

For the Chinese table, the hotel has the outsider catering supplier who is specialist in providing the Chinese food; therefore, the quality of food depends on the quality of

the catering supplier which the hotel concerns of the supplier selected in order to guarantee of good quality of food as well as the other product or service such as music, photographer, make up artist, etc. Moreover, as mentioned from interview with experienced wedding planner, current trend in wedding market showed that wedding couples determined in the creativity of their wedding theme rather than before. Related to the survey data, it also showed that creative theme is one of the important parts for product element. The other factors such as reputation of service provider and variety type of function room (indoor, outdoor, etc.) have less impact to the customer decision-making.

5.4.4 Physical Evidence

About the physical evidence, cleanliness showed the most significance score at “Very important” level while the for the hotel side a level of cleanliness also justify by Thai hotel association to be at the satisfaction level according to Standards Framework for Tourism Accommodation table mentioned earlier at empirical finding part.

Anyways, the pleasant atmosphere and decoration of the function room depends on the individual perception. At this point, there is not enough information on the hotel side about the satisfaction level of the customers towards pleasant atmosphere and decoration of the function room to analyze.

For the appropriate light of the function room is also one of the factors the hotel has to concern. Even the hotel does not represent as a luxury 5-Star hotel but this point does not make an impact to wedding couples concerned as the luxury atmosphere factor consider to be in a “Moderate” level.

5.4.5 Process

As cooperation between customer and organize persons and readiness of function room and facilities are considered to be at the “very important” level, Amari Atrium Hotel also concerned about the cooperation by having the kick off meeting between the related staff of the hotel before the wedding ceremony to assure of the process flown smoothly during the function. Moreover, the hotel also dedicate one person, usually, the banquet manager to take care of all function process for every event organize at function room of ATH.

By the way, about well organize of ceremony sequence which is one of the important factors for the process element, at this point, the hotel still lack of in-depth knowledge and experience about wedding planner, and how to organize a full wedding service function.

For the well organized on extra service on request, the hotel provide some additional value service to the customer such as setting up the honeymoon room for bride and groom such as decorate the bed with flowers, food serving before and after party, offer the room for dress up, function decoration as per requested, taking care of VIP guests or celebrity and promote their wedding (as per guest request.) Recently, the hotel also considering about new service provided such as the limousine services provide for the bride and the groom which taking them from the bride’s house to the hotel.

According to the secondary data about traditional marriage in Thailand, it is shown that traditional marriage has been highly important for Thai lifestyles and cultures. Furthermore, the traditional ceremony has many steps and processes to complete which need a good organize skill and knowledge about the traditional ceremony. Regarding the primary data from survey also showed that mostly wedding couples require a traditional ceremony in their wedding. Moreover, wedding couples mostly have both ethic from Thai and Chinese. Though, through this fact it means that the process of both Thai and Chinese traditional ceremony need to be concerned as well.

5.4.6 Promotion

Regarding the empirical data from the survey questionnaire, the most significant number that influences the wedding couple toward the promotion is sales force with good advice. At this point, Amari Atrium Hotel pushes the effort to bring up the sales volume by using sales staff not only to sales the package, but also give an appropriate suggestion to the couple regarding to their wedding ceremony. However, as mentioned by the hotel from interview, in some specific point about wedding services, sales staff of the hotel is still lack of the in-depth knowledge and experience to giving an advice to customers. Moreover, as the hotel co-promotion with several partner such as “Tee Rak studio” in joining of “All in one package”, the hotel indicated that the package mostly promote and communicate to wedding couples via their partner.

For the sales promotion, it also plays an important role as well as variety of promotion & package. From the empirical finding about the promotion of the hotel, the new promotions are often launched at least twice a year depends on the frequency of the wedding exhibition. For the variety of promotion and package offering, the hotel also has three varieties of packages offering.

Moreover, for promotional mix aspect, the survey question part II about purchasing behavior indicated that Internet is the most essential for wedding couples for searching information about wedding and Internet also is the most influence sources for their decision towards wedding product/service. From the hotel perspective, they also have a plan to create wedding web-site together with their mother company (AHR) and the hotel also using this channel to develop their image at the popular Thai wedding website. In addition, the hotel also aware about the power of Internet by using this channel to check the comment towards their service compare to other competitors as mentioned in the interview.

As indicated in the interview, the hotel has done a lot in wedding exhibition both by themselves which they succeed in several exhibitions such as wedding cake competition and join with other exhibition organize. Anyway, the result from survey data showed that wedding exhibition has lesser influence and lesser use to find the information than Internet, experience couples and wedding magazine.

5.4.7 Place

The most essential aspect towards the place element concerned about parking facility. Regarding to the primary data, the hotel parking lot is available up to 316 cars including the valet parking service. Connected to the survey, for this element, couples consider the availability of car parking facility as the most important. As the function room of the hotel can contain the guests maximum 250 persons for the formal dinner (e.g. Chinese table, buffet, Thai-Chinese dinner).

About the channel of contact, Internet were considered to be at “Important” level while other channel of contact such as phone, sales person and agent company rank in “Important” level which have a lesser impact to the customer decision. Considering about channel of contact at Amari Atrium Hotel, they also provide a various choice of contact including Internet (website & e-mail). Anyway, the website of Amari Atrium Hotel as mentioned earlier in empirical finding that their website does not has a direct access to contact or searching information about wedding ceremony & service.

As Amari Atrium Hotel is located in the business and residential area on New Petchburi road with a short walk to subway station, and nearby other major roads such as Asoke, Sukhumvit and Silom, this advantage of the location is also related to the result of the wedding couples’ opinion toward the place element.

6. Conclusion

Bangkok wedding market is rapid growing from time to time. From this reason, it makes the wedding market is favorable which attract many companies to invest, including the Amari Atrium Hotel to focus more in this market. This growth led the Amari Atrium Hotel to provide the full wedding service as one strategy in order to gain back the sales volume for hotel wedding function.

With the shift of the people lifestyle that have less time which requires the product or services as one stop service; moreover, they need shorter time for transportation, this trend related to one of the hotel strengths that located in the residential and business area to grab the opportunity for being chosen from the wedding couple for their wedding ceremony nearby the central of Bangkok. However, from the external factor, threat, when considering about the market structure and current competition, it demonstrated that there is a fierce competition, plus there are many existing rivalries in the market. Moreover, the internet channel plays the important role for the information provider. The wedding couple can access through the website to choose the service providers. From these reason, the players in this market tend to use the price cutting strategy to compete with other competitors.

In addition, for the new comers who would like to enter this market are required the broad knowledge about wedding market and previous experience because the learning curves of this market is quite high. As the wedding ceremony is very important for ones' lives, the wedding service provider could not have any mistake. In order to cope with the threat, the objective toward the wedding market and the effective strategies are applied to strengthen the company strengths and reduced the weaknesses.

Firstly in order to setting the marketing objective and creating the marketing strategies, the identification of the market customer segmentation should be considered to scope broad target customer. According to the demographics, socioeconomics, psychographics, and geographic, it illustrated that target customers who have potential in purchasing the wedding services from Amari Atrium Hotel are at the younger age who are come from both Thai and Chinese cultures with the similar age between the groom and bride who are working for the private companies in Bangkok which has not much time to plan and manage their own wedding ceremony. Moreover, the target customer has the average income per month in the medium level. Furthermore, they are willing to spend the budget for wedding at 200,000 – 400,000 Bath, and they also consider that the wedding planner is important to help them organize the wedding ceremony. These target customer usually make their own decision in the purchasing, with a little bit influenced from their parents. Besides the target customer group considers every kind of service and product as necessary for their wedding ceremony. Mostly the target customers use the internet channel for searching and purchasing the service.

After complete market segmentation to identified target customer, here comes to the essential part to setting up the marketing objective toward the target group. Due to the opportunity in the growth of wedding market with the high competition together with the knowledge and experience that the hotel have toward this market, it appears in the analysis part that service development for the wedding service is considered to be a strategic direction for the hotel. Firstly, the marketing objective for Amari Atrium

Hotel should be concerned about wedding market and wedding service. Second, the marketing objective should relate with the mission and corporate objective of the hotel which concern about the service quality to exceeding the guest expectation and differentiate themselves in modern styles over the competitors. Third, the hotel should make their marketing objective to be challenging by considering in the aspect about sales volume of their wedding function as they indicate that its drop from last year. From all aspects mention above, the marketing objective suppose to consider about a full wedding service provided by the hotel in order to gain back the sales volume of the hotel wedding function. The specific marketing objective for Amari Atrium Hotel will indicate at the recommendation part.

With the aim of creating marketing strategies in the direction of the marketing mix, the following aspects are important for Amari Atrium Hotel to consider.

Firstly, people element is the most important for the wedding couple to choose the service provider. The hotel should focus on the willingness and attention of the staff (service mind), ability to solve the problem, specialize know how to give an advice, and ability to coordinate with all related persons. To achieve these points, the hotel supposes to use a maintain strategy towards the willingness and attention of the staff (service mind) that the hotel already cover this point through the half-year training. Furthermore, they need to focuses to increase the ability to solve the problem, specialize know how about wedding to give an advice since the hotel still lack on this matter, and ability to coordinate with all related persons.

The price element comes secondly. There are many aspects need for hotel to consider: reasonable price with quality of product and service as first priority. About this point, it is quite hard to analyze the reasonable price and quality of product and service. However, it is can assume that the pricing that Amari Atrium Hotel proposed is reasonable because the proposing wedding package price is not higher than the competitors in the same level. Except from the reasonable price, the price elasticity and payment option are needed to take into their consideration as well. Moreover, the customer criteria decision making also showed that budget is the most concerned factor for them. Though, as long as the pricing of wedding service offered by hotel meet the satisfaction and budget of wedding couples, it is acceptable for customers. Therefore, the strategy towards pricing should not focus on “cheapness than others” as customers are not concerned with low price but they look for reasonable price that meet their budget set and their expectation on the overall services. Moreover, the hotel should consider about the elasticity and negotiability since their previous practice has not flexible for sales person to negotiate with customers.

The product/service is the third important elements. As full wedding service that the hotel plan to enhance to that level concern with a lot of products and services. At this point, the hotel needs high amount of capital fund to invest by choosing a choice to do it all by themselves. Therefore, the strategy towards this aspect the hotel should considering to balance between finding a quality supplier to support in specific product/service which need specialize skill and the option to make it by themselves in some product/service that no need in specialize skill. Many aspects are considered as important for this element. The quality of the function room and food and beverage are significant for the wedding couple including creative wedding theme that also play an important role among young age customers which is target customer for the hotel.

Though, the product strategy should concern to maintain the standardization and quality of the function room that the hotel just renovated it. For the quality of food and beverage, the hotel should maintain their quality level of food and beverage and consider to create a standardize criteria to qualify their catering supplier. Finally, they should add more value to their “one stop service” product by consider to use the creativity theme as the selling point.

The forth important aspect considered is the physical evidence. It comprises of various important aspects such as cleanliness, appropriate light and comfortable facilities. The hotel already perform well in the level of cleanliness of the venue and function room, appropriate light of the function room, convenience and comfortable facilities, good signs and symbols direction. Nevertheless, some aspects are still not clarified regarding the lack of information about the customer satisfaction level. Therefore, the maintain strategy should be use in order to keep the overall standard of the hotel atmosphere to be in a good condition.

The fifth essential element is the process, the overall of the hotel practice already cover in many important aspects. Except for one aspect about the well organized of the ceremony sequence that hotel has not perform well because lacking of the knowledge and experience of the key person. Hence, the strategy towards this element should consider improving the organize ability in wedding ceremony sequence which is complex and sometime it has a different sequence depends on traditional style of the wedding (Thai and Chinese) and wedding theme.

The promotion approaches as the sixth place. However, the analysis is shown that mostly wedding couples use the internet website to search for product and service information. In a meantime, internet and experience couples also the most influence toward their decision-making of wedding couples. Consequently, in order to help the Amari Atrium Hotel to promote their wedding service, those factors are important to consider. Another aspect about promotion is sales force with good advice which also played the important role that hotel need to be concerned about the in-dept knowledge of sales persons in wedding ceremony. Therefore, the promotional strategy of the hotel should concern to use the internet channel to promote a new service (one stop services) directly to target customers. Anyway, even now the hotel already promote their existing service through the popular wedding website but for their new service they should make a distinct action to promote this service since there are a lot of wedding package and wedding website in the market. Therefore, by doing approach to make this action, the hotel could use internet channel in order to create word-of-mouth which is the effective way to increase awareness of hotel’s new service to wedding couples. About the wedding exhibition that are shown to less influence than other, anyway as the hotel has a success in organize the event, though the action of this aspect the hotel should keep on maintain their success exhibition and minimize ineffective exhibition by using other media to promote their new service instead such as wedding magazine that has more influence than wedding exhibition. Finally, the hotel should ensure that their sales persons have an adequate resources to help them giving a good advises about wedding since their sales persons still lacking in knowledge about wedding. Otherwise the hotel should find someway to help their sales persons on this issue as we will give some suggestion in the recommendation part about the specific approach again.

The last element, place, plays as less important comparing to other elements. At this element, the hotel already covers in the important point such as the car parking that available containing up to the maximum guests, and with the good location to get access to the hotel where in the heart of the Bangkok. Anyhow, another important place is the channel of contact via internet. The official website of the hotel is not convenience for customer to search for the information about wedding and contact with the hotel. Hence, the hotel should consider improving their website to catch the opportunity from internet customers.

The specific approach for marketing strategies for each elements of marketing mix will mention at the following part in order to give the guideline for the hotel about the approach and action at each strategy of marketing mix.

7. Recommendation

From the analysis and conclusion, the concerned factors for setting up the marketing objective are analyzed. Those factors stated in the conclusion represent the essential for being consider in order to creating the marketing objective. Therefore, the researchers would like to recommend Amari Atrium Hotel to set up the marketing objective for their wedding business as *“To promote one stop service about value added and benefit of this new service to target audience in order to increase sales volume by 10 percent in one year.”*

To achieve the marketing objective, the hotel should consider and create their marketing strategies in the direction of marketing mix. The practices suggested below in each element are proposed by the researchers for the hotel to take into their consideration to promote their one stop service in wedding business.

1. People

As the result from analysis, it demonstrates that the people element is the most significant for couples to choose the wedding service. This factor concerns about the willingness and attention of the staff or service mind as the most importance. The Amari Atrium Hotel should maintain their staff service mind by continue working on the staff training program. Moreover, toward the ability to solve the problems and special know-how to give an advice for the wedding business, the hotel should consider recruiting the wedding consultant who has in-dept knowledge in the wedding business. This specialist person will be the key person who manage and cooperate with the related departments regarding the wedding ceremony. Not only managing and cooperating, but all so, he/she has to consult about the wedding ceremony in every aspect from the beginning to the end of stage. This person acts like the wedding planner who helps the couples in planning the budget, organize the wedding sequence, create the theme for the ceremony, etc.

2. Price

Since in this research, there is not enough information indicated about the price comparing with the quality of the service and product, the researcher would like to recommend that the hotel should launch the evaluation form to those customers who already had the wedding ceremony at the hotel in order to understand which satisfaction level of the customer toward the reasonable price and quality.

For the price elasticity and negotiability, the hotel should have more flexibility about the price offered to the couples in order to meet there satisfaction and budget set regarding to the data from the survey that the budget is the most influence factor toward their decision-making. Therefore, for the action toward this pricing elasticity and negotiability, the researchers suggest that the hotel should provide the wedding package at various prices. Moreover, the prices should have the flexibility for adding and removing each product and service in the wedding package. Furthermore, the payment option which is important not much less than other factor, from the analysis, the researchers found that the credit card is the most payment method which is used by customers. In the meantime, the researchers also found that another popular payment method existed in loan payment provided through the credit card providers.

At this point, the researchers suggest Amari Atrium Hotel to collaborate with the credit card providers to give another payment option for customers.

3. Product

Since the function room of the hotel was just refurbished and all the standard equipment of the function room is already in good condition; therefore, the researcher would recommend the hotel to continuously maintain the quality of the function room.

Moreover, about the food and beverage factor, it obviously shows that the quality of food and beverage has the great impact for customer decision-making. From this reason, the hotel should up-grade the quality of food and beverage in selecting material and their taste. For the Chinese food that is from the outsider catering, they should have concern about the evaluating quality and taste of the food as all the time and concentrate in choosing the right supplier because these factors will reflect to the hotel image.

Another factor, the variety kind service and product is also considered as important; therefore, the hotel should provide variety kind of product and service as they would like to provide the full wedding service. Also the hotel should consider about “make or buy”, which product that they could make or provide it by themselves, and which product they could buy from the suppliers. Hence, the researcher would like to suggest that the product which required specialize skills, the hotel should buy from the supplier such as wedding suite, wedding photo, make up artist, etc.

In addition, the researchers recommend the hotel to include the wedding theme creating as one of their full wedding service offering to wedding couples. The wedding theme should be creativity and enjoyment which compatible with the need and lifestyle of target audience which is younger group. At this point, the hotel should create portfolio of their wedding package which categorize by the each wedding theme. Moreover, this portfolio should select wedding product/service that related to the wedding theme and putting all of this together as a catalog.

In order to differentiate their full wedding service among the competitors, the researchers suggest the hotel to add more value added to this service by considering offering special service for the groom to impress the bride with the creative idea of proposing.

4. Physical Evidence

Amari Atrium Hotel should maintain their standard level of four stars hotel to meet the criteria for the cleanliness level according to the standard from Thai Hotels Association. There still lack of the information for indicating the pleasant, romantic, luxury atmosphere and decoration of the venue and function room; however, the hotel should conduct the evaluation form for evaluate the satisfaction level of the customer in order to improve or maintain these factors.

5. Process

The process is the fifth importance factor according to analysis of the survey. In order to increase the cooperation between customers and organize person, the wedding consultant (that the hotel should recruit) will be the key person in organizing ceremony sequence and cooperating with the staff and customer.

In addition, for the flow process and avoid the mistake which may occur in the wedding ceremony, the hotel should set up the simulation of the real situation for the wedding ceremony to evaluate the process and prepare the readiness of the staff at once a year.

Since in the target market has various ethnics, mostly are Thai and Chinese - Thai. Sometimes couples decide to have the wedding ceremony which matches with the belief such as traditional Thai wedding, or even the traditional Chinese wedding. Considering about the difference process between each traditional wedding ceremony, the material use, style, decoration, and the most important part, script and sequence are not similar. Each traditional wedding has its complexity in itself; hence, the hotel should be aware of this fact and try to understand the details of wedding ceremony. Moreover, the hotel should create the standard practice book about these complexity traditional wedding in order to avoid the mistake while organize the ceremony.

6. Promotion

From the marketing objective, as the hotel should promote the one stop service to their customer about the value added and benefit of this new service, in order to get the awareness from the target customer, the following suggestions are the direction to achieve it.

As the internet and experience couples are the most influence, the hotel should focus on these two channels to promote their wedding service and in order to create word of mouth. Moreover, they can also use the “viral marketing” such as post the recommendation and compliment in the web board to create word of mouth in the website that the couples usually visit for their searching of the information.

The technology in computer usage is taken part in supporting the hotel to achieve the goal. The hotel should have the program that create and simulate the real situation in wedding ceremony. It is like the 3D presentation which shows the wedding theme idea, the process of ceremony, showing the product/service that related to the theme, etc. The hotel could also use this practice to promote their full wedding service through the internet channel that help them saving cost instead of using other media advertise which has a little influence to target customers. According to the viral marketing, this marketing tool uses the social network to increase awareness of this service to achieve the marketing objective. The hotel could use the file to post in the wedding website such as wedding square website or youtube website. The success of viral marketing depends on the message contains with something unique and clicks with the receivers in order to encourage the receivers to forward those message to others. Normally the humor or useful of the information is used spread wide.

Amari Atrium Hotel should push up their sales effort together with providing a good advice about wedding ceremony by using wedding consultant working together with

sales person. Moreover, the hotel should create the various type of wedding package in order to meet the satisfaction and the budget of the target group who are at the younger age.

7. Place

The internet appears to be the most influence to the couple in searching the wedding information. From the official website www.amari.com/atrium, the hotel should place the information about the wedding or link at the front page (home page). Once the customers visit the website, they can easily follow the link instead of finding of this hidden information.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Interview 1

Interview the wedding planner with Ms. Krissana Udompong, the share holder of the As Your Mind Wedding company, on 7 May 2008 via web based interview. The interview was conducted aiming to get the general overview of the wedding business. The interview script is as per below.

1. In this business, how much does the company need to invest for starting up the business?

For the starting up the company, it's quite important to have some amount of money for investment. It is approximately 1 million baht for the starting up.

2. Do you think this business need a high experience to run the business?

The wedding ceremony is very important to the couples' lives and it's only once in a live time; therefore, there is no wonder when the couples have high expectation toward the wedding planner to decorate their perfect wedding as a memorable day in their live. For this reasons, the wedding planner cannot have any mistake in the wedding function. This business is required the staff with modulate to high experience in this field.

3. How do you get through the customers? (for example attending the wedding fair, via internet website) How easy you can get through them?

The wedding planners usually use every marketing tool to access to their customer such as internet website, attending wedding fair, advertising, etc. Especially the starting time of the business, it is require high investment for marketing budget because it is quite difficult to get through the customer and promote the company to be known. Therefore, it takes sometimes to achieve the goal. This business is judged by the company's portfolio.

4. Is there any government force policy which has the influence in the wedding business?

No, as far as I know.

5. What kind of supplier do you have? (For example photographer, card makers, flower decorators)

We have suppliers in many categories as we want to be the one stop service; therefore, we have to provide everything which the customers may need.

6. Do you think that the company needs to have a lot of suppliers?

Yes, I think so. This business is necessary to have many suppliers in each category. According to most of Thai people believe in good days, and sometimes we have to set the wedding ceremony in the same day with many couples; hence, we need to have the suppliers enough for this kind of days.

7. How easy to access to those suppliers?

No, it's not that easy at all. Since there are many suppliers available in the market, but we quite strict with the quality of each suppliers, it takes some time for us to qualify them and make sure that they are suitable and meet our standardize. As it is

said above that we would like to make the wedding day as memorable day in the couples' lives. We can not make any mistake.

8. Is there any specific or unique skill from the suppliers?

Yes, all the suppliers must have the unique skills and high experience. Once the customers contact our company, all the portfolios will be shown to them. Therefore, we need to remain the level of standardization.

9. How much do you stick with your suppliers?

We don't stick with the supplier that much. It is about modulate. As mentioned, we have the standard, every suppliers need to meet our standard. If they can't do it, we need to say good bye because there are many suppliers who wants to work with us.

10. What are the main services you provide?

Our main service is the wedding planner and organizer.

11. How easy you can get access to the supplier in each category?

It is quite easy for the wedding company to get access to the suppliers since the number of suppliers in each category nowadays is quite huge. But the problem is how to select the suppliers who are efficiency and meet the company's standard set.

12. Do you have any influence to your customer to choose the specific supplier in each category?

Yes, we do. Normally, the customer will decide their own whether which suppliers they would like to have. The customer will consider from their portfolio, plus the recommendation from us to select suppliers who are the best fit with those couples.

13. How does the customer choose the wedding service? What are the main factors influenced to the decision making of customer?

The main factor which is influenced the customer decision making in selecting the wedding planner is the company's experience in the past work together with the reliability of the wedding planner. The wedding planner has to taking care the budget of the couple which is large amount; therefore, it is necessary to select the company which the customer can rely on.

14. What are the profits for the customer of choosing the wedding planner? Is it worth to purchase the service?

We believe that having the professional in each wedding category to take care of the wedding function is better than have the couple do it by themselves. We think that the wedding planner know about the wedding more than the couples because we are in this field and have many experience. So we know what is important more or less in each ceremony, and plus the service we provided to the customer which we will make the perfect wedding ceremony as the best we can. Also, it saves time for the couple to find the supplier themselves or even make it themselves.

15. Between price and quality, which factor the customer take firstly into the consideration?

It's quite hard to answer this question. Actually we have both kinds of customer. However, we need to understand the nature of the customer and give it back for what they need based on the quality and customer satisfaction.

16. Do you think that this service is important to the customer?

I always believe that this business is important for the couples nowadays who want the perfectible in their wedding ceremony. This is what we have to give our hand into their wedding, and at least, we help them to manage the time and other things as we understand that the couples has to work and don't have much time to take care of their wedding ceremony.

17. What do you think about this current situation in the wedding market?

Currently, there are many rivalries in this business. As we understand that it is the same as other business which have the competitors. For the wedding planner business, if you can access to your customers easily, it means that you have the advantage over than competitors.

18. Which distribution channel is the most influence to the customer purchasing decision? (advertising, internet, exhibition, etc.)

Every distribution channel is influenced the decision making of the customers. Then we use every kind of marketing tools to get access to the customers. In the present, internet has the great impact to the customer decision making.

19. What do you think of the current situation in competition in this business?

It is normal that every business must have the competitors including the existing one or the new comer; therefore, we need to improve and develop our service quality to gain the comparative advantage or even the competitive advantage over the rivalries and maintain our position in the market.

20. Except from the other wedding company, do you have any competitors in this industry?

As we mentioned above that our company is to provide the wedding planner service which is one stop service; therefore, the other services provide for this market are also the competitors for the wedding planner company. Those companies or freelances have less impact to the wedding planner company, but they are just like the obstacle for us to access to the customer with the full range of service provider.

21. Does customer have many alternative choice of selecting the wedding service? How?

Yes, the customers always have the alternative choice for selecting the wedding service. It is based on the criteria which the customer set in decision-making for selecting each wedding planner.

22. Does the reputation of the company have any effect to the consumer decision making?

Certainly, it has some effect to customer decision making. It is like the buzz network that friends recommend other friends to use the company that they have experience before.

23. Which factor does have the most influence to the customer decision making? How? Why?

In my opinion, there are many factors influences the customers' decision making in selecting the wedding planner. Firstly, I think it's about the past work experienced

and portfolio. And certainly, it is reflected to the company's reputation. Moreover, the satisfaction of the customer toward the work and the individual in the company is also another effect. Or in other word, we can say that the customer and the organizer is click on each other. And the last factor is the couple's budget in the wedding ceremony. Therefore, as we are the wedding planner, we have to manage the budget to achieve the maximum performance to both the customer and our company.

Appendix II: Interview 2

Interview the wedding planner with Ms. Sunantha Kongwattanasupa, Sales Manager of the Bangkok Wedding company, on 9 May 2008 via web based interview. The interview was conducted aiming to get the general overview of the wedding business. The interview script is as per below.

1. In this business, how much does the company need to invest for starting up the business?

As nowadays wedding business has a high rate in competition, the player who has a large capital fund could gain advantage from using high technology to differentiate its product/service to propose customer. Though, this business needs high capital investment in order to survive and gain benefit from the market.

2. Do you think this business need a high experience to run the business?

This business needs wider knowledge about the market and specific technology to produce a product/service for customer. Moreover, it also needs high experience in ability to find and deal with the suppliers.

3. How do you get through the customers? (for example attending the wedding fair, via internet website) How easy you can get through them?

For our company, we usually use the internet channel to communicate with customers by giving them our company information. This channel is very popular among wedding companies in Thailand because this channel could approach directly to wider customers at any level. However, it depends on each company strategy to get through the customers such as participate in wedding exhibition, using billboard or using internet advertising.

4. Is there any government force policy which has the influence in the wedding business?

None.

5. What kind of supplier do you have? (For example photographer, card makers, flower decorators)

Our company provides full wedding services for customers. Though, we have a lot of suppliers in various kinds to fulfill our full services.

6. Do you think that the company needs to have a lot of suppliers?

In my opinion, it depends on company's capital fund. If the company has a large capital fund, it could provide full services for customers by themselves. (vertical

integration) Conversely, if the company has not much capital fund the number of supplier and relationship with them is important for those companies.

7. How easy to access to those suppliers?

It depends on experience in this market and relationship of the company with suppliers. Less experience could make it harder for the wedding planner company to find quality suppliers to support them.

8. Is there any specific or unique skill from the suppliers?

Yes, we need a special skill from our suppliers such as photographer, graphic designer, makeup specialty and etc.

9. How much do you stick with your suppliers?

As a wedding planner company, we have to make a good relationship and closeness with suppliers to create trust between each other in order to reduce uncertainty. Moreover, we need an efficient communication skill between us and suppliers to bring out a good service to customers.

10. What are the main services you provide?

We provide a full wedding service for customers. Our service comprises of wedding photo, wedding suite, invitation card, wedding souvenir, cosmetic makeup, video recording and wedding consultant service.

11. How does the customer choose the wedding service? What are the main factors influenced to the decision making of customer?

The main factor that influences customers for choosing wedding planner mostly comes from the previous work and experience of the company. Moreover, another factors could comes from the ceremony style and theme, the quality of the product and pricing that wedding planner propose to customers.

12. What are the profits for the customer of choosing the wedding planner? Is it worth to purchase the service?

The profit that the customer would get from wedding planner service are the full product/service, one-stop-service that saving their time, the guarantee in quality of the ceremony and the budget saving. Nowadays the groom and the bride they are not have much time due to their job. To organize the ceremony, it takes a lot of works and details to do. Though, mostly the customer always decides to use the wedding planner service because it is easy for them and reduce their time to arrange the ceremony by themselves.

13. Between price and quality, which factor the customer take firstly into the consideration?

It depends on the level of customers. If customers have sufficient budget, they are always looking to the quality of the work. But if customers have a limit budget, they will stick to the budget more than the quality.

14. Do you think that this service is important to the customer?

Nowadays this service is more necessary that the past due to the trend shift in capital city (Bangkok) lifestyle of Thai people that prioritize to their work more than other

things. Though, wedding planner becomes as a favorable choice for couple to use the service.

15. What do you think about this current situation in the wedding market?

This business is growing continuously. Moreover, a new technology and knowledge also adopt from foreign country to be use in this business also.

16. What do you think of the current situation in competition in this business?

Currently, this business has a high rate in competition. Consequently, a lot of new company or existing company shift from focusing on the quality to price cutter strategy that could bring it to a price war in the near future.

17. Except from the other wedding company, do you have any competitors in this industry?

There is some catering company jump from their main business to play in wedding market. They try to propose one-stop-service like wedding planner together with their catering service by proposing a package that includes the ceremony venue.

18. Does customer have many alternative choice of selecting the wedding service? How?

In recent day, there are a lot of alternative choices and options for customers to select that depends on the information that customers could reach to product/service provider. If those product/service provider did not provide enough information or advertising what kind of product/service do they have, customers tend to find from another sources that provide the exactly product/service what they want.

19. Does the reputation of the company have any effect to the consumer decision making?

The reputation is important and effect to customer decision making especially from word-of-mouth of previous customers.

Appendix III: Interview 3

Interview the Sales and Marketing Department with Mr. Tatthanan Wechwongchai, Assistant Director of Sales, on 17 May 2008 via web based interview. The interview was conducted aiming to get the inside information about the hotel and their wedding business. The interview script is as per below.

1. Who are your competitors in the wedding business?

Normally, the couple will choose the hotel regarding nearby their workplace or house where the guests can easily come. Also the price and the size of the function room in the hotel are important. Our main competitors are Radisson Hotel, The Emerald Hotel, Swiss Hotel Le Concord, Imperial Queens Park Hotel, Grand Mercure Fortune Hotel, and other hotels along Ratchada road, Sukhumvit road, New-Petchburi road, etc.

2. What is your objective for the new wedding business unit?

To be talked of the town when someone thinks of the wedding ceremony, they would think of ATH. Moreover, the hotel will provide "one stop service" which recently we

cooperate with the wedding planner to gain more customers, build the hotel image, and increase the revenue.

3. When you diversified the hotel business to wedding business, what are the company's constrain and limitation?

Mostly, the limitation of our hotel is the function room space since the hotel have limited space which the grand ballroom can only contain around 200 – 250 guests per time. Therefore, the size of the function room hardly supports the wedding ceremony which has the large amount of guest. Moreover, the function design support is still lacking because we are not directly the wedding planner. Actually we can offer many things such as recommend the photographer, music, flower decorator, ice craving, etc; however, for the theme of the wedding ceremony, we still lack of the ability. Normally the couples contact the hotel with their design theme or consider the hotel as just the place for their wedding, but not for consultant.

4. What do you think strength does the company have?

As there is one wedding function at a time, it is an advantage for the customer because the staff can fully concentrate in their wedding rather than anything else. Moreover, the guests who join the wedding function do not get confuse about the function room. In many hotels which have many function rooms and held the wedding functions in the same time usually face this problem. Therefore, they need to manage the sign board very well and have staff to lead the guest. So our customers do not have to worry that this problem will occur.

5. How do these compare to other hotel? Any weakness?

Probably the location which is not close to the BTS, and for MRT the guest has to walk around 5-10 minutes. Also the horrible traffic jam in front of the hotel makes the guests do not want to drive the car and it takes so long time to get to the hotel. Moreover the weakness is the space limitation of the ballroom which can contains less than 300 pax.

6. What is your additional value service out of the standard provided for customer?

Sales staff will take care of the bride and groom closely with special care from the first that they contact hotel for the function until they check out. Moreover, we can be the wedding planner for those who need the advisor. We also suggest the couple when we see the problem or there are something missing because we want them to have the perfect wedding. Also, we control the script if every thing is on the track. We realize that the wedding function is so important; therefore, we will make sure of the coordination between the staff is done smoothly.

7. What is your current service range (service provided) in the wedding business?

- *Wedding package*
- *Set up the honeymoon room for bride and groom such as decorate the bed with flowers*
- *Food serving before and after party*
- *Offer the room for dress up*
- *Function decoration with additional requested*
- *Taking care of VIP guests or celebrity and promote the wedding (if there is any requested)*

8. What is your additional service range (service provided) in the wedding business you tend to do?

We are looking for the limousine services provide for the bride and the groom which taking them from the bride's house to the hotel.

9. What do you think of your current service match with need of your wedding customer?

We can be the consultant when they need. We will consult the problem with the customer from our previous experience and make sure that they will satisfy with the service we offer. Moreover, we can give the advisor as their friend to comfort them when they are nervous. We don't lie to the customer; therefore, this can build the trust and relationship between the customer and sales staff. The customer can be sure of the service we offer is already the best fit to them.

10. Who is your target market for wedding business?

Medium group customer who has not much guests (not exceed than 300 persons)

11. Do you have any plan to communicate (e.g. sales force, advertising, direct response, exhibition, public relation) your wedding service to the target audience? If so, what kind of activities do you tend to do? Why?

We participated in wedding exhibition every year. We also use the internet community channel through Wedding square website which is the popular website about wedding in Thailand by asking the couples who impress in our services to post a comment about us in this website. Moreover, we often arrange the wedding exhibition by our own too twice a year.

12. What do you think about the competition in the wedding business that you are going to compete with?

We are facing the fierce competition in Thailand market. Now most customer usually use the internet channel to check the comment about the hotel and other wedding services that other couples post in the community forum. Moreover, customer also negotiated the price with the service provider directly which is increase the power of customer to source the best service and price they expected for through the internet.

13. How do you communicate to your customer? Which distribution do you use?

We communicate our promotion to target customer mostly via our partner company in wedding business which now we have tight relationship with "Tee Rak studio" to promote our joint "All in one package" program. All of our promotion will post to our hotel website. Moreover, we also have a plan to using the intranet system to sending the update information about our promotion to our partner company.

14. What are the problems you face when arranging the wedding ceremony? (according to the marketing mix 7P's)

About the place, the problem usually occurs when the number of guests comes to the ceremony was exceeded the limit that we agree with customer. Consequently we have change the layout of the function room to support the number of guests. About the product, sometimes customers need to customize the style of the function room but we do not have enough resources such as manpower and equipment. Another obstacle towards this issue is about the size of the room that we can not customize the room too much.

Appendix IV: Standard framework for Tourism Accommodation

Standards Framework for Tourism Accommodation Hotels/Resorts/ Serviced Apartments/Guesthouses by Tourism Industry Standards Development Project: Tourism Standards on Accommodation by the Office of Tourism Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Hotel Standard						
Criteria	Indicator	Hotel Rating				
		1	2	3	4	5
Location and Access	1.1 Located in an environment reasonably suitable for this type of accommodation (5)	√	√	-	-	-
	1.2 Located in an environment highly suitable for this type of accommodation (5)	-	-	√	√	√
	2.2 Safe and convenient access (4)	-	-	√	√	√
	1. Hotel sign or symbol, clearly presented in good condition and sufficiently lit during nighttime (4)	√	√	√	√	√
Sign or Symbol	1.1 Has good and clean area or decorations in front of the hotel, with sufficient lighting during nighttime (5)	-	-	√	-	-
Environment and General Construction	1.2 Has good, clean area or decorations in front of and around the hotel, with attractive lighting during nighttime (5)	-	-	-	√	√
	2. General construction in good condition, clean and safe, with sufficient lighting during nighttime (5)	√	√	√	√	√
	1.1 Convenient, safe embarking and disembarking passengers area with cover (2)	-	√	√	-	-
Car Park and Transportation Service	1.2 Convenient, safe embarking and disembarking passengers area with slope and cover (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	2. Safe and convenient traffic arrangement and walkway (3)	-	√	√	√	√
	3. Good air ventilation (in case of parking lots) (3)	-	√	√	√	√
	4. Sufficient lighting during nighttime (3)	-	√	√	√	√
	5.1 Number of parking spaces at least 20 % of total number of hotel rooms (4)	-	-	√	-	-
	5.2 Number of parking spaces at least 30 % of total number of hotel rooms (4)	-	-	-	√	-
	5.3 Number of parking spaces at least 40 % of total number of hotel rooms (4)	-	-	-	-	√
	6. Transportation Service (1)	-	-	-	-	√
Lobbies	1.1 Clean floors, walls and ceilings in good condition, reasonably decorated (5)	√	√	-	-	-
	1.2 Clean floors, walls and ceilings in good condition, well decorated and suitable for the type and standard of the hotel, including lighting and sound (5)	-	-	√	√	√
	2. Good air ventilation (3)	√	√	√	√	√
	3. Separate smoking area (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	4.1 Waiting area and miscellaneous services provided in good condition (4)	√	√	-	-	-

	4.2 Waiting area and miscellaneous services provided with at least 4 seats in good condition and suitable for the type and standard of the hotel (4)	-	-	√	√	√
	5.1 Safety boxes available(including in rooms in at least 20% of total number of hotel rooms (1)	-	√	-	-	-
	5.2 Safety boxes available (including in rooms) in at least 50% of total number of hotel rooms (1)	-	-	√	√	-
	5.3 Safety boxes available (including in rooms) in at least 70% of total number of hotel rooms (1)	-	-	-	-	√
	6.1 Domestic and international direct dialing available (1)	-	√	√	-	-
	6.2 Domestic and international direct dialing and wireless internet access available (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	7. Efficient and up-to-date information system (1)	-	-	√	√	√
	8. Newspapers, magazines, brochures, other interesting information and the hotel's local information service (2)	-	-	√	√	√
Public Toilets	1. Located in convenient area and distance, safe, clean and separate from utility areas (3)	√	√	√	√	√
	2. Separate men's and women's toilets (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	3. Good air ventilation (3)	√	√	√	√	√
	4. Sufficient light and well-lit (3)	√	√	√	√	√
	5. Well decorated, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	6. Floors in good condition, clean, not slippery with good drainage (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	7.Clean walls and ceilings in good condition (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	8. Clean doors and equipment in good condition (1)	√	√	√	√	√
	9. Toilet's size no less than 0.90 m. wide covering no less than 1.20 sq.m in total area(2)	√	√	√	√	√
	10. Ceiling height no less than 2.40 m. (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	11. At least 2 clean toilet bowls in good condition (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	12. At least 2 clean urinals in good condition (men's only) (1)	√	√	√	√	√
	13. At least 1 clean washbasin with mirror in good condition (1)	√	√	√	√	√
	14. Soap in clean containers provided near washbasins (0.5)	√	√	√	√	√
	15. Hand dryers, hand towels, or tissue paper in clean containers provided near washbasins (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	16. Tissue paper in clean containers provided in every toilet (1)	√	√	√	√	√
	17. Sanitary bags provided in every toilet (women's only) (0.5)	-	-	√	√	√
	18. Clean dustbins near washbasins provided in every toilet (1)	√	√	√	√	√
	19. At least 1 fully equipped toilet for the disabled with appropriate tools (2)	-	-	√	√	√
Conference Room	1. Area no less than 200 sq. m. (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	2. Ceiling height of the lowest part no less than 2.80 m. (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	3. Clean, well-decorated floors, walls and ceiling in good condition, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel, including lighting design with dimmer and high quality sound system with good acoustics (5)	-	-	-	√	√
	4. Good air ventilation (3)	-	-	-	√	√

	5. Well-decorated lobby area for registration, waiting, coffee break or general use, with furniture suitable the type and standard of the hotel (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	6.1 Technician staff responsible for VDO, VCD, DVD, slide projector with screen no smaller than 48 inches or good-quality substitute in good condition (2)	-	-	-	√	-
	6.2 Technician staff responsible for VDO, VCD, DVD, slide projector, LCD projector with screen no smaller than 72 inches or good-quality substitute in good condition (2)	-	-	-	-	√
	7. Sufficient number of good-quality translation system service at least in four languages (1)	-	-	-	-	√
	8. Efficient and good-quality teleconference system service (1)	-	-	-	-	√
	9. Clear fire escape plan or fire exit sign and fluorescent emergency exit in good condition (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	10. Emergency light in good condition (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	11.1 Sufficient number of efficient fire extinguishers with handles or fire hoses, well positioned (in cases where buildings are no taller than 23.00 m.) (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	11.2 Sufficient number of efficient sprinklers, well positioned (in cases where the buildings were built after 1996 and are higher than 23.00 m.) (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	12. Sufficient number of effective smoke detectors or heat detectors, well positioned (in cases where buildings are higher than two storeys) (2)	-	-	-	√	√
Toilets for Conference Room (in cases where it is separate from lobby hall with safety, hygiene, sanitary ware and equipments factors no less than toilets in lobby hall)	1. Located in safe clean area and distance convenient for use without causing interference to conference area (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	2. Separate men's and women's toilets (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	3. Clean floors in good condition, not slippery with good drainage (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	4. Clean walls and ceiling in good condition (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	5. Clean door and sanitary ware in good condition (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	6. Good air ventilation (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	7. Sufficient light and well-lit (3)	-	-	-	√	√
	8. Well decorated, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel (1)	-	-	-	√	√
	9. Toilet area no less than 0.9. m. wide covering no less than 1.20 sq. m. (2)	-	-	-	√	√
	10. Ceiling height no less than 2.40 m. (2)	-	-	-	√	√
Staff of every section and level	1. Properly dressed (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	2. Wear name tag, Thai or English, suitable for the type and standard of the hotel (1)	-	-	√	√	√
	3. Have good personality, good manners and are friendly (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	4. Communicate well in Thai and in foreign languages, comply with job responsibility , suitable for the type and standard of the hotel (2)	√	√	√	√	√
	5. Provide information and help relevant to job responsibility effectively (3)	√	√	√	√	√