

A Customer Relationship Management System for the MICE industry in Sri Lanka – “MICESL”

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Abstract— *A significant segment of the Tourism industry is MICE Tourism, which refers to Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions. MICE Tourism entices revenue to the host country. However, the Sri Lankan MICE industry is unable to accumulate the total revenue from MICE activities, resulting in a negative impact to the growth of the country. Therefore, the research focus was on the impact of Sri Lankan service industry and destination image on MICE Tourism. As a result, a literature survey, web-based questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was conducted to analyse the problem domain in the industrial expert’s viewpoint. A sample of 100 was used to conduct this survey. Based on the survey the key findings of this research was that Sri Lanka has established plans to improve the infrastructure of the country to attract and accommodate more MICE tourists. However, the image of Sri Lanka is not well developed and the service quality of the hospitality and transport industry plays a major role in a MICE tourist perception of the country. Thus, based on the findings of the research it was considered to develop functional online collaboration platform as a website between organizations, hospitality and transport industry of Sri Lanka for attraction of MICE tourists.*

Keywords— Customer Relationship Management, Customer Satisfaction, Destination Image, MICE industry, Service Quality

I. INTRODUCTION

In Sri Lanka, the Tourism Industry is a fast growing industry that has recorded US \$ 1.8 billion revenue in the year 2013 (Sirimane, 2014). The industry has continued to diversify and grow over the past few years. Mendis (2013), states that the industry is promoting Sri Lanka’s other prospects to the travel tourism, particularly, event tourism.

Event Tourism is a methodical planning, development and marketing of events. The strategy is to focus on a market segment that consists of those who travel to events, or who can be motivated to attend events, or who can be motivated to attend events while been away from home (Lau, 2009). Events can be categorized into different categories based on their form and content. They are, Cultural events, Sporting events and Business events (Lau, 2009). Business events are “increasing its popularity every day, and in some cases it becomes the main type of tourism in the destination” (Gurkina, 2010, p.1) and MICE Tourism has become a main focus in many countries that represents a sector of tourism that is of business events and activities.

MICE Tourism is a rewarding business that has shown a steady growth over the past few years in Sri Lanka. “MICE tourists represent the ‘up-market’ calibre of tourists spending three to four times a year more than an average holiday maker” (Mendis, 2013). The motive of tourists who travel to attend MICE occasions is beyond leisure tourism.

The MICE Industry is considered to play a great role with the country’s economy. It also enhances several additional industries, such as, hospitality, transport, and insurance. In addition, this segment contributes towards the reinforcement of the local trade; creation of employment possibilities and development of improved infrastructure.

It has been identified that experience is a new source of value to the customer. They seek not only for a “good quality product or service, but for the outstanding and unique experience which will last for a life time. Usually people tend to look for the experience in the service oriented sectors” (Gurkina, 2010, p.8) Therefore as tourism is a service oriented industry, tourists who travel on business purposes look for experiences that will be