Conceptualization of Retirement Resorts for Senior in Pearl River Delta

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Background
Tourism was one of the earliest industries to open-up China to the outside world and has inspired enormous investment in the lodging facilities in order to accommodate foreign visitors. Although the industry has experienced rapid development in the past decades, it still mainly takes care of the business and leisure travelers' needs and has not segmented into various niche markets to meet different needs that which has already realized in the developed countries. Take the ageing niche market as an example, there is not any well-known locally branded hotel management companies specializing in this type of service to China. Vast majority are the elder care home to accommodate residential purpose. On the other hand, the elder accommodation seekers when they travel domestically still have to check in those lodging facilities regardless of their specific social and medical needs. But the situation is different in those developed countries. For instance, the Choice Hotels International in the U.S. market has developed Rodeway Inn brand which targets at the senior customers and features senior-specific amenities. More than that, developing accommodation properties for the retired adults is becoming a hot investment spot due to the worldwide ageing phenomenon and increasing medical awareness. China is the most populous country in the world; more and more people step into the retirement age. In contrast, the supply of accommodation properties for the elder residents is insufficient at China society. At present, China has 380,000 homes for the elderly with 1.2 million beds. This means every 1,000 elderly people are competing for 8.6 beds, far less than the 50 to 70 beds of developed countries. Therefore, there are much room to exploit in this surging market due to the growing demand on the elderly residential accommodation and current supply shortage.

In a nutshell, based on the above potential analysis of the silver-hair market, it is feasible to build a resort for the elderly which provide both temporary lodging and residential facilities with a wide range of medical, senior-specific amenities and assisted-care services. This paper aims to 1) search for a location and site in Pearl River Delta for the development of retirement resort, 2) identify the market demand and 3) suggest some design tailored made to the needs of senior citizens.

Retirement resort
According to the RETIREMENT RESORTSTM' definition which certificated by the United States' Senior Hospitality Institute (SHI), retirement resort is a place to which people retire for rest, relaxation, recreation, help, relief, aid, service and support. In this report, the retirement resort primarily serves the residential and temporary lodging senior citizen (not only limited to the retirees, but all the people over the age of (60)) for leisure and assisted-living purposes. In addition, integrating residential care with lodging industry in the proposed Pearl River Delta region can bring the first-mover advantage to the company. Another crucial advantage of targeting the aged people is that it can smooth frustrating seasonal demand to some extent which most of hospitality products suffer from because the elderly have more leisure time and allow them to travel in low season.

Location and Site Selection
The proposed retirement resort will be primarily located in the Pearl River Delta region which was specified by Guangdong Province comprising of Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Foshan, Jiangmen, Zhongshan, Zhuhai, and the urban areas of Huizhou and Zhaoqing. Among these destinations in the region, preliminary focus group discussion with businessman in this region indicated that Zhuhai without doubt is the most feasible city for developing retirement resort. Zhuhai is a well-known garden-like coastal city connecting with Hong Kong by water in the east and bordering with Macau. Although the economy development of Zhuhai still lags behind Shenzhen in the region, the city outperforms its counterparts in balance between economy and environment. It has received many awards in recognition of its environmental achievements such as Top 40 Cities for Traveling in China, National Model City of Ecological and Environmental Protection, Cleanest City in China, "The International Award for Most Improved Living Environment" by the United Nations and has recognized as "Most Livable Places for People".
Therefore, locating retirement resort in Zhuhai enables residents and lodging occupants to prevent suffering from the hazards of environmental pollution. In addition to the favorable living environment, Zhuhai also features sufficient tourism resources such as the New Yuanming Palace, stone sculpture of Fishing Girl, enormous island and beaches as well as hot spring resources which can draw the senior tourists from the entire country and further benefit occupancy rate lodging property.

Thirdly, Zhuhai possesses high transportation accessibility and improved infrastructure. The approaching Hongkong-Zhuhai-Macau mega bridge will inevitably shorten the travel time among these three regions and the Zhuhai airport and sufficient land long-haul transportation allow our retirement resort to be quickly reached by our target market.

Jinwan district is recommended by a group of local people as the place of establishing the retirement resort. The Jinwan is one of the most important zone under the Zhuhai municipal government new five-year planning which mean that the district will attract more and more official support and infrastructure injection such as building a hospital in the district which to a great extent benefit our residents of retirement resort. One of essential advantage of the district is that it has a much untapped spaces to build proposed property without extra charge on the change of land use. In addition, Jinwan is the transportation hub of Zhuhai; the airport is situated within the district, the completion of Guangzhou-Zhuhai city light railway, Jiangmen-Zhuhai expressway and coastal expressway in Western part will shorten the drive from Jinwan to all the cities in the Pearl River Delta within 1.5 hours, all of the above reveal that the district will be one of city center in the near future and have high potential to attract many target market especial in the Pearl River Delta region, Hong Kong and Macau.

Market
When considering Zhuhai’s region situated at the central geographical location of Guangdong province and adjacent to the Hong Kong and Macau (Figure 1), the three areas become the major source of its market originator. Regarding the market size, the population

Figure 1 The Pearl River Delta Economic Zone in Guangdong Province


(over 60) in the Guangdong province surpassed 8.8 million which accounted for 11.14% of the
ageing population by the end of 2004. When people are getting older, they do not tend to live alone. Living at the residential apartment with residents in common interests and age presents an alternative of life style which traditionally lives with their children in the Chinese community. Owing to the professional medical care facilities and services and a rich selection of social activities, the life quality of the elderly will be enriched and enhanced. The majority of aged people in the Guangdong province have not independent income source, rather rely on their family. But the province features high per capita GDP at nearly RMB 19,707 yuan (2004) and willing to spend money on their parents' consumer market. Therefore, considering the enormous ageing people in Guangdong province and corresponding spending power, it was a signal to turn eyes on the residential care market.

As for the Hong Kong and Macau, the ageing population was about 1.08 million and 46,500 respectively by the end of 2004. Nowadays, there are more and more retired residences in tend to the Guangdong province for living as the price index is lower than Hong Kong and thereby benefiting higher money purchasing power. More importantly, due to the higher land price and operating cost of providing elderly care facilities in the two special administration regions than in province, the government (Hong Kong) encourages the elderly to live in the Guangdong province which provide sufficient potential customers for the elderly residential apartment.

However, for those aged people with serious diseases, we have to request professionals to evaluate the suitability of the patients to stay as our resort impossibly features complete array of medical equipments and services.

**Suggested Design**

**Types of Accommodation**

- **Residential Apartment**
  Residential Apartment will accommodate long-staying guests who require home-like design and features and mainly targeting the aged people (including retired adults) in the Guangdong province, Hong Kong and Macau

- **Temporary Lodging Property**
  In order to differentiate from those existing elder care home in the market, the retirement resort also provides the elderly with lodging accommodation facilities for leisure and vacation purposes. In Generally speaking, traveling is one of most popular activities among the elderly. There were two set of surveys conducted in Shanghai and Beijing revealed that the ageing people would like to travel around. In fact, a statistic discovered that there are over 20 million aged people plan to travel domestically in China every year. For 2006 forecasting, this figure will account for a quarter of the total domestic tourists and the quantities are getting larger in the future. Hence, such huge so-called "Silver Hair" market brings exponential potential to the tourism industry by offering the tailor-made traveling product and service. For example, many travel agencies recognized the significant potential of the elder tourism market and thus carry out specialized the elderly-based tourist routes. For this consideration, the temporary lodging property would not only targeting the aged people from the Guangdong province, Hong Kong and Macau, but also the rest of the mainland China with the total ageing population of 143 million (2004) by offering the most suitable accommodation and service to the aged travelers to stay.

**Unique Features in the Retirement Resort**

As the proposed retirement resort aims at filling the senior accommodation niche market, the elderly residents characterize specific medical and social needs. Thus, their preferences result in designing different features and services. Although many of the tenants are healthy, design features better response to the need of those aged.

**Overall**

In order to impress the tenants and potential residents, the overall theme of the resort is to create a
home-like, vacation and relaxation ambience in the complexes, but not hospital environment. To
achieve this, the color of the wall paint has to carefully select and better less apply white-painted
wall in premise. Concerning the need of wheelchair user in the resort, high tables (32-36 in.) offer a
closer approach for them and high crossbars (9in.) between table legs allow wheelchair to access.
The all doors stalled in the resort are wider than in ordinary hotels in order for wheelchair users'
convinces.

**Room**

**Lighting** The brightness of the light can be adjusted in order to cater to different needs. Some aged
people prefer incandescent light to fluorescent light while some of them want brighter lighting due
to the presbyopia. Concerning the dim lighting, hotel should also equip with large character signage
showing clear direction.

**Bed** The bed should be adjustable to be up or down by turning caster, so that elderly can transfer
from their wheelchair. It can also be bent to a comfortable angle for sleeping or watching TV on the
bed. Besides, it should be placed to maximize a view of the outdoors so that the elderly can enjoy
the beautiful scenery outside. The mattress should provide good heat retention and be firm enough,
otherwise elderly will respectively feel cold under air-conditioned and distressed if the mattress is
too soft.

**Remote Control Device** The button of devices like TV and air-con remote control should feature
much bigger for the elder residents' convenience. The same applies to the larger button ton for the
in-room telephone, it also features vocal alert systems to provide assistance in case.

**Bathroom** Bathtub design can make it difficult to get in and out, especially to transfer from
wheelchair. Therefore, a combination of tub and shower with rims or handles would be suitable. A
seat installed on the end of the tub with handheld from the seat are useful for elderly who do not
have the strength to lower themselves into the tub. Multilevel soap dispenser should be planned.
Also, it is suggested to use a liquid soap dispenser since it may require less coordination than
retrieving bar soap from a holder. Besides, all surfaces should be slip resistant.

**Public area**

**Wheelchair accessibility** It is a prime concern that the public area should be barrier-free for
wheelchair accessibility. The resort need to plan a central core avoids a long corridor, considering
the walking inconvenient elderly and the instant provision of rescue for any contingency.

**Handrail** The handrail in the public area should have rounded ends or return to the wall to
minimize the chance that it will snag clothing and cause a fall.

**Outdoor garden** A spacious and pleasing garden with fishponds and pavilion basically reverse the
seniors' physiological age and green belt good for their eyesight.

**Medical and Social Services**

**Medication monitoring and administration** The resort needs to feature periodical body check and
dietary supervision for the elderly to better control their healthiness. Physician Doctors and nurses
are important for elderly who has a variety of disease. 24-hours physician should stay at the resort
to provide instant medical service. Besides, they should also supply nutritional guidance, nursing
education, pharmaceutical services during the consultation by the old people. Ambulance service
In case of the residents' sickness and contingency which the on-duty doctor and nurse cannot
handle, our resort should provide ambulance service in order to transport the patient as soon as
possible.

**Social Work Services** Old people easily have emotional problems due to anxious for health and
death. Everyday problems also become difficult for them to manage especially when they have
illness or injury. To lessen their suffering, clinical social workers should be stationed at the hotel to help them during their difficult time.

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, the proposed retirement resort will feature elder-specific amenities and service as well as the medical care. There are two main types of accommodation facilities: residential apartment and leisure resort. There are a wide range of facilities in premise offer to the guests and residents such as Spa, Food & Beverage outlets, retail shop, fitness center, swimming pool, health education and rehabilitation center and sufficient social activities for the elderly. Also, the prospective resort can cooperate and reach agreement with the Jinwan Golf Course nearby to allow our interested resorted residents to play. In lighting of the resort features, there will detailed elaborate in the later part.

As the resort is a full-service accommodation property and features many unique technological amenities and devices and personalized medical service, market leader pricing will be adopted. However, the price charged will systematically depend on the range and degree of medical services the elder residents required. The most influential media medium are TV, radio and newspaper, therefore the retirement resort can carry out promotional printed and TV advertisement in order to reach our target customers. Considering the purchasing behavior highly rely on "Word of mouth" such friends' referral and recommendation, it will be workable if we organize some promotion programs through the elderly association to create and strengthen brand awareness and visibility.
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