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Передмова

SOME ISSUES OF MARKETING ACTIVITY IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Abstract

The article discusses some of the issues of marketing in the tourism and hospitality business in the post-coronavirus period. The author's discussion refers to: the need to promote the importance of targeted marketing, special attention to changes in environmental factors, active participation of the state in training qualified employees. The author of this article believes that in the post-covid period, the Georgian tourism and hospitality business operates under conditions of increased demand for their services. It is an important issue to improve the awareness of the local population about the positive impact of tourism development in raising their employment and living standards. This will help the country to deal with social problems and will be beneficial not only for the people involved in the mentioned business, but also for the whole society, which suffered material and moral damage during the coronavirus pandemic. Thus, the present article discusses this problematic issue and provides the author's recommendations.

Key words: Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Tourist Satisfaction, Targeted Marketing, Personnel Selection

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the priority directions of the development of the national economy of our country. Because it is believed that the development of tourism in the country will contribute to the growth of the economy, additional foreign exchange earnings, will reduce the level of unemployment and promote the promotion of Georgian traditions and historical-cultural values. The development of tourism has a positive impact on various sectors, such as: transport and communication, construction, agriculture, production of consumer goods and others.

The tourism industry has been one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It should also be noted that tourism is closely related to other industries, which also suffered material damage. Due to the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Georgia, among the measures implemented by the Government within the framework of the anti-crisis plan, it is worth noting that for the support and recovery of the affected tourism sector (small, medium and family hotels), co-financing was provided for 3,254 loans of existing hotels (Government of Georgia, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the pre-pandemic period, the popularity of Georgia as one of the attractive tourist destinations grew more and more. Today, it is an important issue to activate and develop the tourism sector. It should be noted that the situation has changed positively since the current year.

Income from foreign travel in October 2021 was USD 142.3 million, an annual increase of USD 127.1 million (9.4 times), and USD 124.6 million (-46.7 percent) less than in October 2019. In October of this year, 15.5 percent of income (USD 22.0 million) came from the EU countries. Russia (USD 18.3 million), Israel (USD 15.5 million), Turkey (USD 14.8 million), Ukraine (USD 14.5 million) and Saudi Arabia (USD 9.5 million) also hold significant shares (The National Bank of Georgia, 2021).

In 2022 year Revenues from tourism in the country's economy amount to 1.6 billion US dollars, which is 3.2 times more than the figure of 2021. If we analyze in relation to the year 2019, the rate of recovery of income from tourism in seven months exceeds 87%, among them, the average rate of recovery in January-April was 68%, and in the period of May-July the average rate exceeded 100% (Ministry of finance of Georgia, 2022).

Studying tourist behavior is one of the hot topics in tourism and hospitality marketing. Consumers are ordinary people who engage in activities related to the purchase of products or services. Consumers therefore deal with the same issues as psychology in general: memory and cognition, affect and emotion, reasoning and decision-making, and more. Consumer behavior primarily refers to the act of buying a certain product or service. A purchase decision requires finding relevant information, selecting a retail facility or service provider, and other actions to be performed prior to making a purchase (Icek Ajzen, 2008).

In modern conditions, companies operate in the era of free exchange of information. In the field of tourism and hospitality, consumers are offered services, and consumers of services trust feedback more than advertising. A customer satisfied with the service rarely tried to change the company (Kotler, P., & Keller, K. 2015).

When choosing tourist destinations in Georgia, foreign tourists are interested in the information posted on the social network. At the same time, the media marketing activities carried out by Georgian travel companies by foreign tourists are assessed at an average level, which indicates inappropriate activities of local travel companies in social networks (Todua, N; 2019).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2017, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to the country's GDP was about 9.3% (overtaking agriculture, forestry and fishing which accounted for about 8.2% of GDP in the same year), and this rate is likely to increase to 10.5% by 2028. This sector is highly attractive (more than US\$ 3 billion of annual revenue is generated through foreign tourism only), however the international tourism market is very competitive and all of the factors which influence growth need to be carefully considered for this sector to continue to grow (The World Bank, 2020).

But development should be economically viable, socially just and environmentally friendly. The future development of tourism is impossible without a careful attitude towards the environment, cultural monuments, without rational use of resources. (Seturi, M.; Urotadze, E.; 2020).

As is commonly known, it is necessary to have certain objective conditions in the tourist destination, such as a natural-climatic environment, favorable for the rest and health of the population, historical monuments, relevant infrastructure. Georgia has a number of conditions to be attractive country in terms of tourism (Seturi, M; 2019). But tourism can have a negative impact on the environment. Countries use the attractions and events sector to increase the attractiveness of their tourist destinations (Middleton, V; Fyall, A; Morgan, M. 2009). Building Tourist destinations image and branding using proper marketing measures is crucial. Brands have become increasingly important for tourist destinations (Kotler, Ph., Bowen, J. T., Makens, J. C., Baloglu, S., 2016).

According to the Global Tourism Codex of Ethics, state authorities must ensure the protection of tourists, vacationers and their property; Special attention should be paid to the safety of foreign tourists, considering their potential vulnerability; Taking into account the demands of tourists, they should facilitate the implementation of specific measures regarding the issues of information, prevention, protection, insurance, assistance; In accordance with the national laws of their country, it is necessary to strictly condemn and prohibit theft, assault, robbery and threats against tourists and tourism industry personnel; Also, intentional damage to tourist, cultural and natural heritage sites (Global Codex of Ethics for Tourism).

The development of travel and tourism can be accompanied by environmental risks. The impact of tourism on the environment can be direct and indirect, as well as positive and negative. Tourism cannot develop without interaction with the environment, but through targeted planning of its development, negative consequences can be reduced and positive consequences can be increased (Kordzaia, I.2016).

METHODOLOGY

In the research process we used secondary data. We studied Georgian and foreign scientific works, analytical reports, information on the websites of certain Georgian organizations, data of the National Statistics Office. We analyzed the past situation and studied the current situation.

FINDINGS

Georgia has significant resources to ensure the satisfaction of tourists. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the number of international visitors has decreased dramatically. The situation should be gradually corrected. Profitable functioning of tourism is important for the development of the country. In which marketing can play a big role. However, marketing approaches are still not sufficiently used by organizations, enterprises or individuals working in the tourism industry. The increase in the number of tourists does not yet mean its profitable operation. Not enough attention is paid to identifying the needs of the segment and preparing special marketing offers for each of them. Tourists' satisfaction is determined by several factors at the same time. Unfortunately, not infrequently the existing services are weak. More attention should be paid to the development of sustainable tourism. And it should aim to reduce the resistance caused by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the host community.

Business owners and managers clearly understand the role of attracting tourists and a positive image of their enterprise for effective operation. However, adherence to recognized marketing approaches and principles will play an important role in further customer interest and retention. Satisfied travelers leave their positive reviews, which affects the growth of the tourist flow. Based on the analysis of the current situation in the field of marketing environment, it was concluded that it is necessary to pay more attention to the targeted approach.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that the main focus should be on the successful implementation of the following issues:

- The use of targeted marketing by the enterprises of the tourism industry, which will take into account the offer of high-quality services, in order to attract more high-spending tourists to the country;
- Supply of new tourist products to meet the demand of the international tourist market;
- In the selection of personnel, preference is given to those who speak English. Based on this demand, it is advisable to conduct special trainings for future personnel. The level of service will be improved as a result of the expansion of the qualification raising programs for those employed in tourism and those seeking employment throughout the country.

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