

About the Importance of Tourism Promotion Policy (Georgian Case)

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Abstract

Today tourism is one of the main directions of development of national economy in Georgia. With the development of this sector, the country can receive significant revenues and reduce the level of unemployment. The tourism promotion policy, which the state is implementing, is expressed to carry out a number of activities and support by the state. Georgia has a great tourist potential. Georgian resorts and tourist destinations have gained wide recognition. Our country is becoming more attractive for foreign travelers and tourists. Tourism development is not only the result of the industry activity. But it needs united effort of state and private sectors. The growth of interest towards Georgia on the international tourism market is largely conditioned by the state's policy of tourism promotion. In this work are given analysis of the current situation in Georgia and a number of conclusions. According to the authors, the positive results were brought the use of marketing approaches and the work to demonstrate the advantages of tourism destinations of the country. In this case a big role played the use of world leading news channels that have a large audience in different countries of the world. Also, it is necessary to master marketing approaches to every enterprise and organization involved in the tourism and hospitality industry, because they make great contribution to the satisfaction of tourists.

Keywords:

Marketing, Tourism industry, Tourism promotion, Tourist satisfaction, Service

Introduction

Tourism is a complex system, because its efficient functioning is related to the activities of enterprises of different field. The main difficulty of Travel and tourism, as an understanding of the essence of the industry, is the variety of private and public sector enterprises, which are involved in tourism services. The main sectors in travel and tourism are:

- Hospitality sector,
- Attractions and events sector,
- Transport sector,
- Travel organizers' and intermediaries' sector,
- Destination organization sector. [Middleton, Fyall, Morgan 2009, p.11]

The spread of information has a positive effect on the growth of interest towards the country and its tourist destinations. Obviously, positive results bring continuous work to show the advantages of your country to the world, show your country's capabilities and those advantages, which will make travel in this country unique and full of pleasant impressions. Therefore, on the news channels, which have a large audience of millions of viewers in different countries around the world, dissemination of information about your country is effective. Promoting advertisements and films on television channels worldwide can significantly increase awareness of the country and its tourist destinations and promote their popularity.

Literature Review

The use of marketing tools plays a major role in attracting tourists. It should be noted that in the 21st century marketing are becoming increasingly important in financial success of companies. Cities, countries and regions compete with each other for attracting tourists [Kotler, Keller, 2015, p.7]. Marketers should define what functions are needed in the process of creating new services, what kind of price to put, how much money they spend in advertising, sales, and Internet activities [Kotler, Keller, 2015, p.4].

It's important to determine the buyers' satisfaction index. If this index gets worse, it's necessary to determine its reasons, which is not a simple process. The reasons may vary in: reducing the product's quality, the increase in buyers' expectation level and etc. [M. Seturi, E. Urotadze, 2017, p.170].

The National Tourism Administration has a major role in promoting tourism destinations, which has developed the National Tourism Strategy, and then its appropriate action plan. Positive outcomes can make use of different methods of public relations, such as Press tours and Info tours. For example, representatives of media and tourism companies from different countries of the world visited Georgia by invitation of Georgian National Tourism Administration. After the visit, the positive articles and good stories were written, programs and documentary films were prepared about Georgia. In 2016 Georgia hosted 600 journalists and 280 tour operators. More than 680 programs, stories, articles and blog posts have been prepared about Georgia [Ministry of Economy ..., Projects, Tourism, 2017]. In 2017, in order to increase Georgia's awareness, 99 international press tours were held, within which Georgia visited 683 foreign media representatives, also 14 info tours - Georgia visited 239 tour operators [Ministry of Economy ..., More than ... 2018].

„Georgia took an important step towards the development of tourism in Georgia, using a wide variety of social media marketing. GNTA signed a joint advertising agreement with Travel Website Trip Advisor. The campaign will include posts and detailed information about the country, which will increase the number of international tourists in Georgia“ [N.Todua, 2017, p. 168].

Participation in international conferences helps to creation and development of brand in tourism, the use of digital resources, to increase of sales through the Internet. Among them participation in digital marketing conferences is important. Such events are frequently attended by representatives of various influential organizations. International Conferences are a great opportunity for tourism and hotel business entities, advertising agencies, social media managers and marketers. In order to enable the participants to be able to use new technologies such as social media, internet platforms, applications, news channels, etc.

In 2017 the following campaigns were implemented in order to increase Georgia's awareness:

- Online marketing campaign in 19 countries.
- Advertising campaigns: BBC, Euro news, Discovery, Trip advisor, Expedia.
- The articles about Georgia were prepared by the following media outlets: BBC, National Geographic, National Geographic Traveler India, Forbes, Le Monde, The Independent, The Guardian, Elle, Observer, Bird watching Magazine UK; Daily Mail, Vogue; Huffington Post, etc. [Ministry of Economy ..., More than, 2018].

Conducting international events in the given country helps stimulating tourism. For example, in September 2016 the first global conference of UN World Tourism Organization Wine Tourism was held in Georgia. The conference participants shared each other with their successful experience [Georgian National Tourism Administration, UNWTO - The first global..., 2016].

It is important to develop stimulating measures for the development of domestic tourism, so that more people start traveling within the country. For example, the Georgian National Tourism Administration is implementing a stimulus campaign "Discover Georgia". Within the framework of this project, media tours are taking place in different parts of the country (region) [News Agency..., The Project, 2015].

Participation in international exhibitions and fairs is especially important for the country's tourism products. Tourist exhibition-fairs are a highly effective way, since the goal is achieved with the smallest expenses, positive information extends to the masses and geographical spaces quickly and efficiently. Tourist exhibition-fairs are presented with new products, access to new markets. Representatives of business circles of different countries participate in the exhibition-fairs, which directly connect with each other. These measures can be influenced on the official and business circles, public opinion. In 2017 The Georgian National Tourism Administration together with private sector participated in the 21 International Tourism Exhibition. Such activities promotes popularization our country's tourism potential [Ministry of Economy..., More than, 2018].

In the formation of a positive image, a particular country can be of great help with close cooperation with the World Tourism Organization, visits and meetings with officials of this organization and high ranking officials. During the

meetings a positive role has been given to discuss the issues related to the country's tourism potential. It is also useful for the country when the heads of the National Tourism Administration are attending World Tourism Organization Conferences. For example, Georgian National Tourism Administration participated in the 21st General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which was held in Colombia, In Medellin. The high-ranking delegation of 120 countries attended the event [News Agency "GHN", National Tourism Administration..., 2015].

Results of research

The results of tourism promotion policies are clearly visible from statistical data. In recent years, the economic importance of tourism has increased in Georgia. In the particular country, the economic importance of tourism can be judged based on statistical data, such as:

- Number of employees in tourism sector,
- Export-import of tourist services,
- Share of tourism in gross domestic product,
- Direct foreign investments in hotels and restaurants,
- Airports Bandwidth and Railway Bandwidth, etc.

From 2009 to 2015, the number of visitors in Georgia was one of the highest in the world: the total number of international travelers increased by 293% [Georgian National Tourism..., Georgian Tourism Strategy, p. 5].

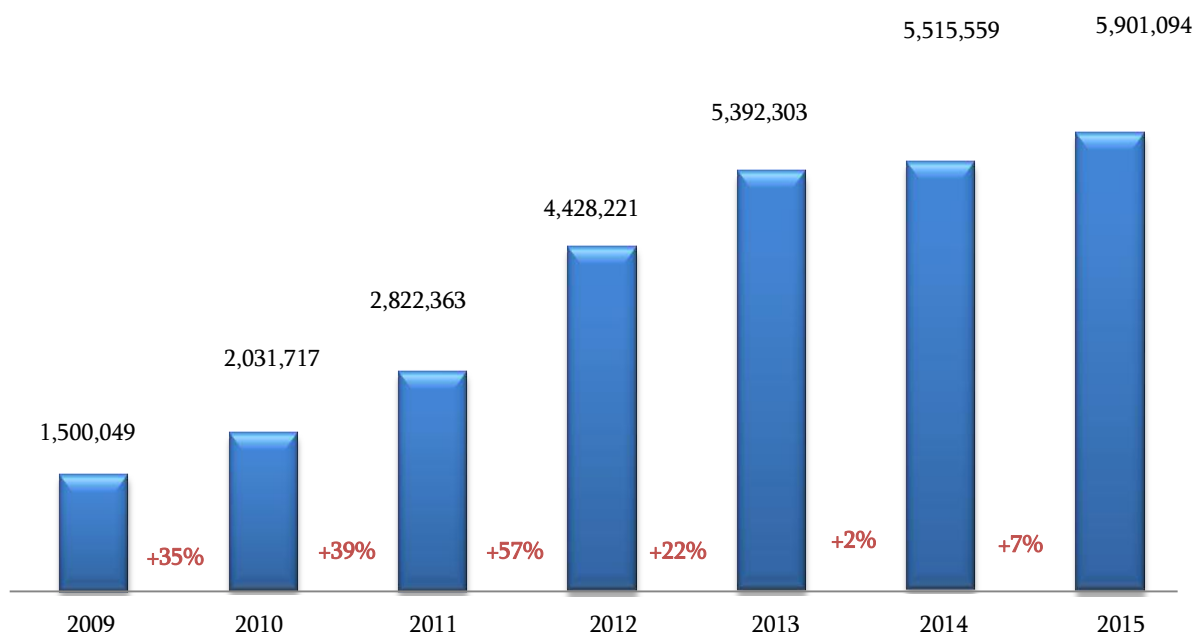


Figure 1. Number of visitors in Georgia (2009-2015)

Source: <http://gnta.ge/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/>

5,059,106 international travelers arrived in Georgia, according to the data of January-August 2017, growth compared to the same rate of previous year + 18.9%. 1,080,449 international travelers arrived in Georgia only in August of 2017. The growth rate is + 27.4% compared with the same period last year [Georgian National Tourism..., Statistics, 2017]. Also, statistical data of direct foreign investments in hotels and restaurants indicates the growth of economic importance of tourism in Georgia [Ministry of Economy..., Direct Foreign..., 2015, p. 1].

Table 1.

Direct foreign investments in hotels and restaurants (Million dollars)

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
17.7	-13.4	124.9	138.8	52.4

Source: http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/georgian/bop/FDI_2016-GEO-adj-with%20cover.pdf

Thus, the statistical data presented indicate positive results of tourism promotion policy. However, for the assessment of the success of the tourism country, we should take into consideration not only the number of tourists, but also earned revenues. In 2016, revenues in Georgia reached \$ 2 billion from international tourism, and by the end of 2017 the country received 2.7 billion US dollars. According to the forecast data, in 2018 Georgia will have 8 million international travelers, while revenues from international tourism exceed \$ 3 billion [Ministry of Economy..., More than... 2018].

7,554,936 international travelers arrived in Georgia, according to the data of January - December 2017. Growth compared to the same period last year was + 18.8%. The number of tourists from the total number, who followed 24 hours and more, were 3,478,932 in Georgia (growth + 27.9%). Most of the visits were from Armenia (+ 14.8%), Azerbaijan (+ 11.2%), Russia (+ 34.1%), Turkey (-0.8%) and Iran (+ 118.3%). The positive trend is from the EU countries. In January – December the following countries are distinguished by the number of arrivals from the EU in Georgia: United Kingdom + 39.9%, Netherlands + 31.1%, Spain + 29.9%, France + 29.6% and Germany + 25.7%. [Georgian National Tourism ... , Statistics 2017].

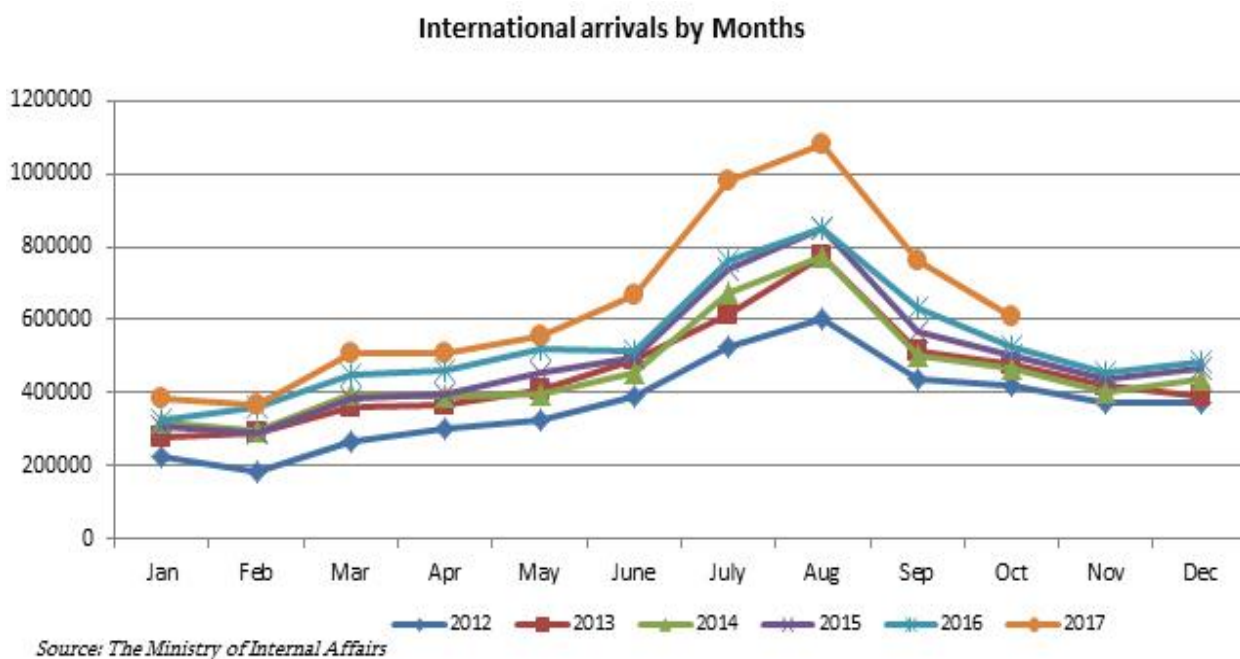


Figure 2. International arrivals by Months in Georgia

Conclusions

Thus, the country's tourism promotion by the country's government has increased the demand for tourism services in Georgia and positively affected tourism development, which were revealed in specific events and activities. However, in our opinion, it is not enough. For further development of tourism we have the following recommendations:

- Taking into account the natural conditions and other attractive factors for a country's tourism destination within the country, the correct adjustment of marketing aspects is necessary for further success. For further development of tourism, Georgia has potential opportunities in terms of natural environment. However, for the full use of these capabilities it is necessary to update the existing infrastructure within the country, arrange new ones that require significant financial resources. The main focus of the tourism service should be the international standards of service. It is necessary to add new facilities and arrange facilities.
- During the development of tourist products, advantages and wishes of potential tourists should be determined in advance. Then traveling products with the highest value for customers should include in tour package and information about it should be provided to potential customers at the place available to them. The tourist should have the opportunity to easily receive full information about the travel route and all the services that are interesting to him, which should be given during the trip. This affects the decision of his purchase.
- Georgia will have a positive impact on the growth of international tourists' satisfaction if dishes prepared on the basis of Georgia's agricultural products, when Georgian cuisine dishes are made from local produce products. This will make Georgian cuisine more interesting for international tourists.
- For a positive impression on international tourists we have a desirable proposal: further improvement of the living standards of the Georgian population, overcoming poverty in the country will help the population to be happier. The citizens of our country will be self-confident, happy. Positive attitudes toward tourists will increase, which will make a good impression on international tourists.

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