MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS OF NAVODARI

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Abstract

For the last years the tourism circulation manifested in Navodari has intensified, this area registering a significant increase in the number of structures of tourists reception with functions of accommodation. The area has become an interesting tourist destination both for young tourists who access tourist services specific to night entertainment, here being the most famous clubs of the seaside, and for families with children who choose this area due to the beach which is large and not very crowded during high season. In the last years, the tourism entrepreneurs of this area have adopted strategies to diversify tourist products and services in order to meet the needs and requirements expressed among tourists, diversifying strategies by commercialization of tourism products for various tourist segments and using flexibility strategies which target the adjustment of the offer to the changes which appear on the tourism market.

Keywords: strategy, tourist destination, diversification, tourism product

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1. The revival of Navodari area – as a tourist destination of the Romanian seaside

Navodari has become during the last years a destination accessed more and more by Romanian tourists who want to spend their holidays on the Romanian seaside and who look for travel packages which reflect the quality of the tourism services included and who also want to keep away from the much crowded Mamaia resort.

The tourism entrepreneurs of Navodari have tried for the past three years to value the tourism potential of this region investing in establishments of tourist reception with functions of accommodation of bed and breakfast type of two, three and four stars and also in arranging some portions of the beach. In order to attract

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the tourist segment aged between 18 and 30, the night entertainment has developed in the area, the clubs here attracting a significant number of young people. Tourism development in Navodari is one of the priority objectives of the local administration that has tries, through a series of projects, to promote and develop the tourism products commercialized in the area. In this respect, Navodari City Hall, together with its partner, the European Institution for Cultural Tourism EUREKA of Bulgaria, organized in the period 30th-31st October 2013, in Balchik, the Seminar entitled "The diversification of tourist travel packages for leisure activities" within the project "The transboundary center of tourism affairs and related activities – Fish and fish products market

(FISH TOURISM CBC)" financed within the Program of Romania – Bulgaria transboundary cooperation 2007 – 2013. The event lasted for two days, with the participation of the representatives of the tourism sector of the two partner countries, the following issues being taken into consideration:

- instruments and strategies of diversifying tourism services and packages related to leisure activities;
- good European practices regarding tourism services related to leisure activities;
- opportunities of diversifying tourism services and packages in Navodari – Balchik area.

This event aimed at focusing on the main possibilities of overcoming the lack of experience in supplying tourism services in these areas and at introducing innovative instruments to diversify tourism related services.

2. Market strategies adopted by the tourism entrepreneurs in this area

Some of the tourism agencies which develop their activity in this area apply an undifferentiated strategy, which within the present context, when tourists are more and more demanding and want diversity, does not find an optimum applicability, the results being less efficient. For the tourism products and services, commercialized by the companies in this area, to satisfy various segments of consumers, there should be designed marketing programs specific to each segment and a differentiation strategy should be adopted.

In order to identify new means to increase the tourism demand, tourism entrepreneurs of Navodari should adopt strategies of stimulation and development. These strategies are viable only under the conditions which meet the tourism development coordinates of this area.

In order to increase sales on the existing markets of some tourism companies, these apply a rephrasing strategy which has the effect of improving the quality of the commercialized products and services. Such an example would be Phoenicia

Holiday Resort which proposes a new holiday concept – semi all inclusive – in Navodari area. Unique on the Romanian seaside, Phoenicia Holiday Resort represents a new tourist concept in Romania thought to shelter especially families with children, offering them all the necessary comfort to relax and have fun at the same time.

The experience of the last seasons gives the right to the entrepreneurs who own this resort to claim that they can create holiday stories closer to "home". Situated in Navodari, 150 meters away from the beach, this complex is the most spectacular investment of the last years, covering a total surface of 100.000 square meters out of which over 60.000 square meters represent the establishment. The ultramodern holiday perimeter offers in the first phase accommodation to over 1200 people, in 420 apartments, a parking lot of 400 places, restaurants, bars, terraces, oriental cafés, pools and waterfalls, playing grounds for children, a billiards club and a gaming center. The resort includes three restaurants and four bars. The offer is diversified and thought to cater both for children and for adults, from natural juices and ice-cream to cocktails and alcoholic drinks in all the bars of Phoenicia Holiday Resort.

The tourism products and services commercialized in Navodari area are not well-known on foreign markets. In order to take over these markets, the companies should apply market development strategies. This approach involves the commercialization of quality tourism products which could arouse the interest of foreign tourists who value quality and safety.

Moreover, it is necessary to adopt in this area some strategies of concentric, horizontal and lateral diversification. The first type of strategy aims at launching on the market new tourism services and products (new routes, complex thematic trips, etc.) in order to attract new segments of tourists.

The strategy of horizontal diversification can be applied by the companies which hold a good position on the Romanian seaside tourism market and associated with various service providers managing thus to conceive new products which address however to the same segments of consumers.

3. Strategies specific to the marketing mix

Nowadays, the tourism market is passing through continuous changes and the tourism products commercialized in Navodari area will undergo competitive pressure, so that we have to update and develop these products in order to meet the needs of tourists and the conditions imposed by the market. This area offers a wide range of development opportunities for the tourism products and services. Diversifying and capitalizing the offer by adopting some

viable marketing strategies can become key aspects of tourism development in this area.

The main tourism forms which can be successfully practiced here and can attract new segments of tourists are: sport tourism, by practicing nautical sports, historical and cultural tourism by capitalizing the anthropic tourism potential in Histria area, which is near Navodari. In this respect, the administrative and territorial unit of Istria implemented the project "In the footsteps of the Argonauts: promoting the tourist route Constanta, Istria, Dobrogea Gorges", financed by the Regional Operational Program, Priority Axis 5 "Sustainable development and tourism promotion", The Main Intervention Domain 5.3. "Promoting the tourism potential and creating the necessary infrastructure, in order to increase the appeal of Romania as a tourist destination", based on the financing agreement no. 1228/ 14.02.2011 concluded with the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism.

The aim of the project was to value the biodiversity as well as the cultural and historic patrimony of the area Istria - Dobrogea Gorges, within the thematic route "In the footsteps of the Argonauts", by a unitary promotion campaign adapted to the national tourist tendencies. The thematic route addresses to backpackers interested to live a cultural experience, a tendency manifested more and more at global and national level. The project had in view the creation of a cultural identity in the area Istria - Dobrogea Gorges both at local and national level, the increase of the local tourism offer competition by the implementation of an efficient system of promoting and exploiting ecotourism and cultural tourism and attracting tourists by informing them, creating thus an area impact and a coordination of the development efforts.

In order to permanently adapt the seaside tourism offer to the demands of tourists, the entrepreneurs can apply a strategy of flexibility of the tourism product by paying close attention the market evolution and tourist needs.

The strategy of differentiation is often used by tourism entrepreneurs of Navodari who have more supporting elements: the product as a whole, the services associated to the product, the personnel involved in the activity of commercialization and providing the services, the image (of the product, the company, the resort, etc.)

This strategy of differentiation can be seen in the case of the three stars La Scoica Hotel Complex made up of: a hotel, a restaurant, a ballroom (1000 people), terraces on the bank of Siutghiol lake, a stage, playgrounds for children, a wharf, a nautical base and a private beach on the lakeshore. The complex makes available to the passionate ones a variety of natutical sports such as: boats without engine (hydrobycicles, kayaks, boats, surfs) and motorboats (ski-jets, boats, catamarans).

Acting on divided markets, the tourism companies in Navodari should opt mainly for a strategy of adapting the quality of tourism products specific to the seaside to the demands of the various segments of tourists or for a strategy of qualitative differentiation from the offer of the competitive companies from the countries which offer similar products.

Referring to the price strategies, the entrepreneurs of Navodari should take into account, in their future marketing policy which aims the prices, the possibility of applying all-inclusive prices, which represent an agreement by which the tourist pays an unique price for the room and all the facilities from the resort, including meals, drinks, access to the beach and renting the equipment for nautical sports, etc. This kind of arrangements by tour operators becomes more and more popular for beach holidays in Mediterranean resorts. Their attraction point is that they offer the tourist a guarantee for the budget he needs.

The most frequently used strategic options of Navodari tourism companies in their distribution activities are represented by the selective distribution adopted by the entrepreneurs who use a limited number of middlemen and by the intensive strategy used by the tourism companies which sell their products and services through a significant number of middlemen.

From the point of view of the promotional policy, the typology of the strategies adopted by the entrepreneurs of this area is quite varied. Depending on the importance given by tourists to the products, services or the tourism company, this shapes its strategy (the strategy of promoting a global image or the exclusive promoting of products and services).

Depending on the development of the activities in time (V. Balaure, 2005), tourism companies of Navodari opt for the permanent or intermittent marketing communication strategy. Taking into account the fact that the tourism products specific to this area are mainly commercialized during summer season, many of the tourism companies apply the second strategy.

Other strategies of promotional communication, successfully used by the entrepreneurs of Navodari are the offensive, differentiated strategy, the strategy of a mixed approach (both of the segment of individual consumers and the organizational consumers), the strategy of a combined use of communication media, the strategy of a combined support, etc.

The wide range of strategic options guarantees the tourism company numerous opportunities in order to project and implement it marketing communication.

4. Strategic directions in the personnel policy of the tourism companies of Navodari

In the steps taken to reach their strategic objectives and tactics, the tourism companies of Navodari must efficiently manage all their resources. They need to pay greater attention to the human resource that is essential to the existence and progress of the tourism company, as it capitalizes all the other resources in order to efficiently develop the activities within the company.

The personnel policy has a particular importance within the market approach of the tourism companies. One of the most important challenges for a tourism company is to form the team of employees which is the most suitable to sustain an efficient use of the company's resources so that all the company's objectives could be reached. The personnel employed in the tourism sector has an important role in anticipating the needs of tourists, in personalizing the services and in creating a long time relation with the customers, contributing thus to their fidelity.

As the tourism companies became aware of the role of the personnel, they included it in the marketing optics forming the concept of internal marketing in the specialty literature and in practice.

The internal marketing represents "the attracting, training and keeping the employees on the company on positions which can ensure the maximum and efficient use of their work capacity and at the same time a system of motivations which allows the satisfaction of material necessities as well as the professional aspirations of the personnel" (L. Berry, A. Parasuraman, 1991).

The important role of the personnel in offering tourism services imposes a special attention to the way of attracting, selecting, keeping and promoting personnel within the company.

The sustainable development of tourism depends not only on the attractive landscape and tourist facilities, but also on the competitiveness and quality of the employees. Being one of the most competitive economic activities in the world the tourism industry needs understanding, professionalism, commitment, organization and efficient strategies of developing human resources (Master Plan for the Development of the National Tourism 2006-2026).

Competitive services can be ensured only by highly-qualified and specialized personnel with the right aptitudes and performances. Creating a qualified workforce in tourism implies basic education, professional training courses, as well as continuous training at the place of work.

Tourism in Navodari registers nowadays a major deficit of qualified personnel. Most entrepreneurs, due to their seasonal activity, do not employ qualified personnel nor invest in professional training. This is reflected in the quality of services offered by insufficiently trained employees who lack motivation because of their low salaries.

Moreover, the level of competence in tourism is reduced as a result of the performance standards, work standards and educational and training standards.

The motivations for the crisis of the qualified personnel in Romanian seaside tourism are various (Master Plan for the Development of the National Tourism 2006-2026):

- a large number of workers in the domain of tourism leave Romania to work abroad, because of the low level of salaries;

- the current training programs do not focus on forming skills and abilities. Many providers of training courses issue diplomas and certificates necessary to get a job without ensuring a complete and adequate training;

- the great number of hotels and hostels which are built annually;

- daily extended work hours;

- wrong perception of faculty graduates in this domain who consider that they should start their careers as managers;

Tourism entrepreneurs of Navodari should adopt, within their personnel policy, strategies of attracting qualified workers in the domain, strategies to fidelize the employees, strategies to increase the quality of the services provided by offering professional training completed by training courses and strategies of increasing competitiveness by offering some facilities to efficient workers.

5. Conclusions

The success of the tourism entrepreneurs of Navodari will certainly depend on their investments in human resources and on their strategies adopted in order to increase the quality of services provided by tourism workers. Moreover, in order to increase tourist circulation in the years to come, it is necessary to aggressively promote this destination on our domestic market as well as on the external market.

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