QUALITY OF SERVICE IN TOURIST INDUSTRY

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Abstract: The customer satisfaction and company profitability are related to the product and service quality. A high level of quality will lead to a higher satisfaction of the customer, allowing higher charging prices and often cost reduction. The quality improvement strategies normally lead to increase the profitability. The task of improving the quality of products and services must be a priority. Most customers do not tolerate the poor or average quality of products or services. Currently, the companies have no choice than to adopt total quality management if they want to remain on the market implicitly to be profitable. The quality is the best insurance that a company can have in order to preserve the customers, is the best defense against competition and the only way to support the development of the company and to boost the earnings.

Key words: quality; customer satisfaction; profitability; services; competition.

INTRODUCTION

The quality approach has become inherent in any tourist activity, regarding the profitability (reduce the costs of non-quality), the image of the company, products, customer loyalty, but also regarding the subscription to an issue of sustainable tourism. The last one is understood as a management form which associates territories and companies. We often associate the ethics to three founding ideas of sustainable tourism such as environmental, economic and social.

The companies have integrated the quality dimension in their management since the seventies, although the tourist enterprises, in the euphoria of a very high growth, have been later questioned on this issue. The awareness of this quality imperative is today a reality. The tools such as certification, labels are becoming the real signs of confidence. The proliferation of charters, codes and other recommendations which are designed by international organizations, professional or associative structures, demonstrate the awareness of tourism sector on the issue of sustainable development, overpowered and important for this field. However, it must be nuanced this trend due to the difficulty for evaluate and control the implementation and impact of these instruments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of this paper have completed two phases. In the first phase, it has been required a theoretical and bibliographical documentation concerning the quality of service. It has been defined the issue and formulation of the main hypotheses in order to constitute an explanatory and convincing model, inducing the importance and activity of the researched subject. The final phase has been drawn up and completed by the collected information. The drafting of this paper was made in laboratory, based on the notes from the ground, the existing material and consulted bibliography.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The quality concept is certainly not new. The tourist industry is particularly interested since the last decades. The tourist managers have understood the close connection between the integration of the quality concept and the commercial success of a company. Several factors led to this change including: more and more experienced and sophisticated tourists who require a good quality/price ratio; the consumers, more informed, know about their rights and demand compensation when they consider to be cheated on quality; in a competitive field, the companies realize that the quality become an imperative and finally, the addition of laws and regulations require the companies to ensure a quality change. It is therefore clear that the quality, associated with the commercial success, was quickly the responsibility of the marketing department. The customer is now, after the product, the center of the strategy, it must be also based on the needs of the customers and provide them the product they demand according to the desired quality.

Improving the quality of tourist services is a necessary requirement to ensure the needs and expectations of the consumer, considering that the tourism is a bio-psycho-social and spiritual necessity, having a profound effect on improving the quality of life, increasing vitality and life expectancy.

In the context of globalization of the tourist market and of a business environment characterized by fierce competition in which the gravity center of the market becomes the customer rather than the product, the companies should change their way of thinking and acting, on the assumption that satisfy of customer requirements is a necessary condition but not sufficient to achieve performance in the market.

So, we considered important to tackle the quality of tourist services as an expression of services efficiency in relation with the consumer demands by arguing the vital role of provider staff in providing customer satisfaction and the importance of correct knowledge for the expectations and demands of consumer in order to provide tourist services at a higher level.

In order to improve the quality of tourist products, respectively provided services, it is necessary, first of all, to establish the quality requirements of customers, and secondly it is important to respect the quality standard requirements in services, in general, and in tourism field, in particular.

The study of economic and social impact in tourist services quality requires the establishment of indicators system in order to evaluate and quantify the studied phenomena. In this regard, the main indicators analyzed are: tourist offer, human potential in tourism, tourism demand, request - offer relationship, valuable results of tourist activity and quality of tourist activity.

The relationship between efficiency and service quality is required to be mentioned in the approach on particular meanings of efficiency in this field. The optimization quality - efficiency relationship provides the guarantee of an activity in accordance with consumer demands and market requirements, being the key to success for service enterprises.

Total quality management is based on the following assumptions:

1. The quality is reflected in the eyes of customers. The quality must begin with customer needs and to end with their perceptions, the quality improvement has an effect only when it is perceived by the customer.

2. The quality should not only reflect in the company’s products or services, but in its activity. The total quality is not just a whim, it is an deeply rooted element in the principles of human philosophy.
3. The quality requires a total commitment from employees. The quality becomes a reality only in companies whose employees are committed to this notion which have the motivation and training to implement it in reality. The successful companies remove barriers between departments. The employees work as a team whose goal is to perform the basic processes and achieve the desired results.

4. The quality requires the existence of "high quality" partners. The quality can be obtained only by those companies whose partners also provide the quality. Therefore, a company based on quality must work with suppliers and distributors of high quality.

5. A program focused on quality issues can not save a poor conceived product or service.

6. The quality can always be improved. The best way to improve the quality is by comparing the performance of the company with the best performances obtained in this field of activity in order to equal or surpass them.

7. Improving the quality requires sometimes huge jumps. Although the form must act for a continuous quality improvement, it will be forced from time to time to make great jumps in terms of quality. The companies can register some quality improvements by carrying out an intense activity. The great performance in quality require finding new and intelligent solutions.

8. The quality does not cost. Some managers argue that to achieve a qualitative increase they will have to spend more and reduce the cadence of production. Improve the quality means learning "to do right things for the first time". The quality is "incorporated" in the product or service.

9. The quality is necessary, but it may not be sufficient. Improving the quality is necessary to satisfy the needs of customers more and more pretentious. At the same time, a higher quality does not always mean a decisive advantage, especially when the other competitors improve their quality in the same way.

10. The quality involves a long term commitment. A short-term approach to the quality could lead to a disaster. Increasing the expectations of employees relating to quality, the means to do things differently should be provided.

The total quality management has become a basic strategy in customer satisfaction and profitability of company activity. The managers of companies must understand how the customers perceive the quality and should provide a quality higher than the quality offered by competitors. Providing the quality requires total involvement of managers and employees and existence of an adequate measurement and reward of results.

The service quality concerns, in fact:
- the comfort of accommodation or food and the quality and variety of products and services offered to the consumer;
- the behavior of sales staff, presentation of services and information;
- Serving time.
Each of those elements has a particular importance for the service quality.

CONCLUSIONS

The concern for quality and ethics appears, at least initially, as a constraint - the responsibility of stakeholders about their choices and their actions. It represents a cost which makes it difficult for the economic performance. However, this approach can also be viewed as an investment for medium and long term, because by developing the confidence of partners, the agency costs are consequently reduced.
It is considered that the quality strategy is the actual successful strategy because it brings benefits both to consumers and providers. The market performance of a service company depends on how they are perceived by the effective consumers, on the impressions of potential customers. Through continuous service-oriented management of organizations in the knowledge and completely satisfying consumer demands, respectively a deep understanding of their behavior — in order to provide reliable service — can be assured services of a high level of social efficiency.

REFERENCES