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CHALLENGES in HIGHER EDUCATION and RESEARCH in the 21st CENTURY

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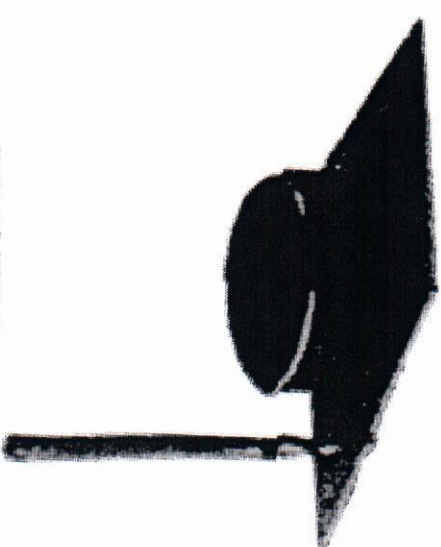
Proceedings of the ninth international conference on

CHALLENGES in HIGHER EDUCATION and RESEARCH in the 21st CENTURY

organized by the Technical University of Sofia
June 5-8, 2012, **SOZOPOL, BULGARIA**

edited by:

Tasho Tashiev, Radoslav Deliyevski, Badea Lepadatetscu



191	A. Lazarov
193	EXMC and AC Main Profile
196	N. Serafimov, T. Brushev, B. Nikolova
199	Over Voltage and Over Current Protection for Electronic Devices
202	R. Sava, R. Litichev
204	Method of Densification by Compression of Thin Veneers Obtained from Indigenous Species
208	B. Lepadatescu, O. Zeleniuc, C. Buzatu
210	Increasing the Part Surfaces Quality through Superfinishing Process
212	M.R. Chinciu, R. Chinci
216	Illustrating the Dimensioning Process of a Part by Using the Machining Operations Plan
219	M. Georgescu
220	Laboratory Test Bench for Vehicle Propulsion Permanent Magnet Motors
224	Gh. Mares
228	Contributions to the Designing of Face-Milling Cutters
232	Gh. Mares
236	Determination of the Main Parameters at the Cold Hardening of Metals Using the Process Cyclic Impact with Balls
239	Gh.N. Radu, I. Comanescu
245	The Establishment of the Theoretical Base of the Disks Stability Loss Due to the Variation of Temperature along the Radius and on Thickness. Disks in Rotating Motion
247	Gh.N. Radu, I. Comanescu
	"Animation" Working Method
	The Study of the Behavior under Dynamic Load of the Main Beam (Profile "I") of a Portal Crane (Gantry Crane). The State of Deformation of the Main Beam in the
	I. Enescu, D. Enescu
	Modeling of the Roughing Process
	SECTION 7: Business and Marketing
	T. Secarea, M.D. Rucanda
	Risk Management General Risk Evaluation Model
	A. Neacsu, D. Boscor, G. Bratucu, A. Madar, C.-A. Baltescu
	Quality Surveys Used in the Hotel Industry Case Study: Comparative Analysis between the Hotel Chain Coralia and the Hotel Chain Ricos
	I. Cuga
	Researches Regarding Behaviors of the Recruitment, Selection, Induction and Communication Processes in Human Resources of Companies
	C.-A. Baltescu, G. Bratucu, D. Boscor, A. Madar, A. Neacsu
	Applying Relationship Marketing in a Travel Agency
	L. Popa, S.S. Dutcu
	Eco-Design for Product Life Cycle Management
	SECTION 8: Humanities Role
	A. Dragomir, I.-T. Crețu
	The Theory of Forms without Fundament: a Model of Considering Cultural Imports
	D.C. Ibañescu
	Enescu's Encounters

APPLYING RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IN A TRAVEL AGENCY

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Abstract: The tourism industry is a global industry, important and complex, and the success of the tourism firms depends on obtaining customer satisfaction through consumption of the services offered. In this article are assessed the actions specific to relationship marketing applied within a well known travel agency from Romania, "Info Tours". In order to identify the opportunities to improve these approaches, it was organized a marketing research with the topic "Opinions, attitudes and behaviors of customers regarding the relationship with the travel agency "Info Tours".

Keywords: relationship marketing, loyal customers, travel agency.

1. Introduction

The evolution of companies' market objectives have determined important changes in the decisions of marketing policies. If a few years ago in the forefront of marketing strategies was the selection of new customers, recently, the creation of new customers and the increase in existing customers' loyalty has become a priority, but very difficult in the same time. The customers' loyalty includes the measures taken by a company for focusing positively the present and future customers behavior intentions on services offered by providers in order to develop the relationship with these customers [2]. In this framework a new business philosophy is approached, a strategic orientation which emphasizes the idea of maintaining and improving the relationship with current customers, more than attracting new customers, meaning relationship marketing [6]. Regarding the conceptual framework of relationship marketing, marketers consider that this is based on three different approaches, but interdependent [4]:

1. The approach from behavioral perspective (based on trust, satisfaction, loyalty for the organization, enthusiasts customers, exclusivity);
2. Approach from network theory perspective (relationships networks, network company-suppliers-customers; modern customer);
3. The managerial approach (the central role is played by domestic marketing).

Under current conditions is more and more difficult for a provider to differentiate its offer in relation to competitors in terms of physical attributes, and relationship marketing is an effective and necessary mean in ensuring customers loyalty and building a strong partnership with them [3].

2. The Specific Application of Relationship Marketing in Tourism

In the tourism industry a few conditions can be distinguished which favor the application of relationship marketing: the existence of a constant demand for services, the evolution of companies' market objectives have determined important changes in the decisions of marketing policies. If a few years ago in the forefront of marketing strategies was the selection of new customers, recently, the creation of new customers and the increase in existing customers' loyalty has become a priority, but very difficult in the same time. The customers' loyalty includes the measures taken by a company for focusing positively the present and future customers behavior intentions on services offered by providers in order to develop the relationship with these customers [2]. In this framework a new business philosophy is approached, a strategic orientation which emphasizes the idea of maintaining and improving the relationship with current customers, more than attracting new customers, meaning relationship marketing [6]. Regarding the conceptual framework of relationship marketing, marketers consider that this is based on three different approaches, but interdependent [4]:

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QUALITY STRATEGIES USED IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY CASE STUDY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE HOTEL CHAIN CORNELIA AND THE HOTEL CHAIN RIXOS

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Abstract: In the field of hotel services quality is considered, more and more frequently, the most important factor of competitiveness. In this paper a comparison is made between the quality of services offered by two hotel chains from Eurasia, one being in the peak and the other at the beginning. It is about the grand hotel chain Rixos and the small hotel chain Cornelia. The two hotel chains are representative for highlighting quality hotel services.

Keywords: hotel chain, performance, quality strategies.

1. Introduction

The tourist services of any kind are defined by the quality of delivery. The way in which these services arrive at the customer makes the difference between them [1]. The assessment of tourist service quality by the consumer is the result of comparison between expectations and the experience gained.

Although the heterogeneity of tourism products make the quality assessment difficult, a few features are identified for defining quality in tourism [3]:

The accurate performance of tourist services by honoring promises and performing services in best conditions (accuracy in preparing bills, keeping proper accounting methods, service performance in time).

Showing a maximum responsibility from the tourist organization, expressed by receptivity at customers' desires. Competence assured by using specialized knowledge and qualified staff in the performance of tourist service.

The accessibility of tourist services expressed by ease in contacting the tourist organization, in finding information and acquiring the tourist product, the flexibility of the operating hours and minimization of the waiting time.

Kindness of the staff, politeness, respect, consideration and friendship for the target audience.

Communication, correct information of target audience by using a proper, adapted language.

Credibility assured by the name and reputation of the tourism organization, by the closeness degree between the provider and consumer during the performance of the tourist service.

Physical, financial safety and confidentiality, meaning the lack of any danger, risk or doubts regarding the performance of the tourist service.

Understanding the specific needs of the target audience by customization of tourism products and existing relationships between the tourism organization and consumer.

Tangible elements should be as attractive as possible: modern furniture, new, comfortable, pleasant environment, well dressed staff, modern equipments, endowments ac-

ording to the classification type of the accommodation

unit.

Regarding the quality of the hotel services, this is given by all the elements in contact with the customer, from door-keeper, receptionist, luggage carrier, waiter to the colour of the walls from the room, the bed size, the tiles in the bathroom and the view of the room. All is meant to delight the final customer and to make him choose that hotel again for his next holiday or business trip. There are hotels organized in chains, extended in several towns or seaside, mountain and balneary resorts. The organization in chains of the hotels increase confidence because customers are more and more critical.

2. Presentation of the Hotel Chain Rixos

The history of Rixos chain is relatively recent, starts in the year 2000 with the opening of the hotel Rixos Labada. The Rixos hotels are built on the principle - ALL EXCLUSIVE & ALL INCLUSIVE - that means customers have access at anything, and what is more important, everything is special for them. The hotel staff is convinced that the guests deserve all the best, to spend an unforgettable holiday. The oriental hospitality is felt from the entrance: the customer is expected with lukum Turkish delights, the hands are sprinkled with lemon water and wiped with refreshing wipes and in the room a lot of fruits and flowers are waiting. In each hotel there is a basic restaurant with hundreds of food types, fruits and cookies and 5-7 restaurants "a la carte" where each visitor can make a free reservation and many bars and cafes at customers' disposal in any moment. The first hotel, which opened the Rixos chain was Rixos Labada. They have chosen as locations only the Turkish mediterranean coast, than they have expanded in Kazakhstan, Lybia, Croatia, Bahrain, Ukraine and most recent, the United Arab Emirates. [6].

The strategy adopted by Rixos chain: the increase of the employee's skills by using training programs in order to have a higher productivity, but also by rewarding the employees with awards, suggestions and recognition.