Secondary Tourist Resources as Contributing to the Creation of Customer Value (Case-Study: The "Ice" Hotels)

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Abstract: The article characterizes the objects of service activities as tourist attractions. The objects of the research are hotels, which are regarded as secondary tourist resources. They possess tourist value and attractiveness; moreover, they contribute to the creation of customer value. The article discusses such concepts as experience, attractiveness, industry involvement, and customer value.

Key words: Attractiveness • Experience • Industry involvement • Customer value • The "ice" hotel

INTRODUCTION

Today there is a shift of tourist value and attractiveness from the direct tourist resources toward the indirect ones (social and economic). The socio-economic group of tourist resources is actively used in the formation of the service space of tourism. The basis of the service space is formed by the objects of service activities, which are considered as tourist attractors in this context.

In relation to tourism resources, attractiveness is defined as the ability of a resource to attract tourists en route [1]. What attracts attention and excites interest? Something new. Something familiar, but not often repeated. It is what meets the immediate needs of the tourist, what he / she finds appealing that absorbs attentions and promotes involvement.

Companies offer experience when they engage tourists in ongoing activities on a personal level, trying to make the event unforgettable for them. Such system is called "industry of involvement." [2, 7].

Main Body: The industry of involvement is very closely connected with customer value. Value is the fourth economic proposition which is as strikingly different from other services as services in general are different from goods. Unfortunately until recently it was mostly overlooked [2].

In 1996 the famous American observer Virginia Postrel wrote: "... We are more and more surrounded by immaterial economy, where the most important sources of wealth and prosperity don't belong to the world of physical objects. We are not used to the economy where beauty, entertainment, attention, learning, fun and even spiritual saturation is as real and economically valuable as the steel or semiconductors" [3].

Proceeding from the above-said, the authors conclude that experience, entertainment, interest, involvement, different emotions experienced by a tourist while using services, as well as the entities and their services, form customer value.

When a tourist buys impression he / she pays for unforgettable moments of his / her life, as prepared by the host entities, which means he / she pays for his / she own feelings and emotions. In order to satisfy the need for new knowledge, new experiences, new sensations and experiences, which is typical of modern tourists seeking self-development through travel and tourism, it is necessary to create new concepts of tourism, tourist services and the realization of their service in new formats, new architectural, engineering and technological solutions [4].

The authors discuss the conceptual solutions in the case study focusing on the hotels that employ the so-called "ice (snow) technology". Some part of the total
experience obtained during a holiday derives from the impressions directly produced by the accommodation facilities.

The northern-most ice hotel of Europe is Alta Igloo, which is annually rebuilt near the town of Alta in Norway. The hotel receives tourists each year beginning from the middle of January. Its operation season is very short and it directly depends on the weather and the presence of snow. It usually operates from mid-January till mid-April. The hotel is located on the bank of a river. The ice is the material for the majority of the objects to be found in the hotel, such as beds or cups. Each year the design of the hotel is dedicated to new and interesting topics: Norwegian fairy tales, Vikings, or wild animals.

There is also an ice chapel in the hotel designed for romantic wedding ceremonies [5].

Kirkenes Snow Hotel is situated near the border of Russia and Norway. The hotel is famous for its 12-meter-high massive dome, as well as delicious dishes cooked on open fire. The Kirkenes Snow Hotel is built from scratch every year. This year it has more than 40 rooms, a bar and a chapel, all made of snow and ice. You are offered an option of queen and king size beds, and all rooms have snow decorations on the walls. Ice sculptures are also on display throughout the hotel. And the hotel offers northern lights wake up calls.

The Swedes refer to the Ice Hotel, which is located in the small Swedish town of Jukkasjärvi, as one of the wonders of the world. According to the legend the hotel, located just 200 km from the Arctic Circle, was built completely by accident. Initially the site was used to hold an exhibition of ice sculptures and buildings. A number of those who attended the exhibition wished to stay overnight in the exhibit-houses, and in the morning they shared their impressions with other tourists.

Thus, 1989 saw the world’s grandest ice-and-snow hotel come to life. «The Ice Hotel» was quite small - it had four rooms and a bar. The risky venture unexpectedly struck it lucky. In a couple of years the hotel became very large. Now it has a restaurant, a cinema, a sauna, a theater, a church and even an art gallery. Now «The Ice Hotel» rates top among the hotels made of snow and ice.

Each year the hotel construction is commissioned to sculptors, artists, craftsmen, who carve windows, tables and chairs, beds, sculptures - everything necessary to turn an ice dwelling into comfortable accommodation.

The first ice hotel in Eastern Europe was built in 2006 in Romania, on the glacial lake of Bale. As the hotel is situated high above the sea level in the Romanian mountains of Fagash, tourists can get there only in winter and only by ropeway. The hotel has 10 small rooms, as well as a small butpicturesque church. Those tourists who are not satisfied with the prospect of spending the night in an ice room can stay in a chalet near the hotel.

Each year the Finnish town of Kemi witnesses Scandinavian sculpturers erect a real snowy village called the Mammut Snow Hotel. The major unique point of this hotel is that it is entirely made of snow, not ice, and it is richly decorated with magnificent ice sculptures.

Apart from single ice hotels, there are chains of "ice / cold" hotels, for instance, the "Igloo-Dorf" hotel chain, distributed among seven ski resorts of Switzerland, Andorra, and Germany. The technology of Igloo Hotels is quite interesting: each year huge inflatable balls are covered with snow and moistened with water, which, when frozen, turns into ice. The construction solidified, the balloons are blown off, and decorators equip the ice rooms with carved ice furniture and interior subjects.

The 10-meter-wide Igloo room can accommodate 6 guests. The rooms with double rooms are provided as well. The huge hot open-air tub helps the tourists to keep warm. The hotel offers heated tent rooms with a furnace and a double bed for the tourists who want to spend warm night [8].

**CONCLUSION**

The conditions in all the ice hotels are very similar. The guests are offered rooms with a maximum temperature of ~3°C. The guests receive a set of warm clothes and warm sleeping bags. As the beds are also made of ice, an indispensable element of the interior is reindeer skins. The guests are served with hot drinks straight in bed when they wake up. However, spending a night in such conditions is not necessary. You can admire the interiors, spend a couple of hours in the ice room with ice furniture, take of yourself in exotic surroundings taken, and then go to the restaurant and enjoy hot mulled wine served in ice glasses.

The popularity of this kind of accommodation is growing each year. Spending at least a couple of nights in an ice hotel is fashionable, prestigious and very expensive, but it does not stop tourists in their pursuit of impressions.

**REFERENCES**


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