POSSIBILITIES OF TOURISM MARKET RESEARCH VIA THE INTERNET

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Abstract: Business in tourism due to it's changing and complex environment becomes increasingly difficult without an effective market research. New aspects of consumer behavior and especially new technologies give rise to new or existing tourism growth markets. In developed economies, all the greater attention is given to study the role of new technologies in the field of tourism, and market research using the Internet.
Key words: market research, Internet, tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Business on the principles of marketing and modern management achievements implies a continuous activity at getting diverse information for decision-making in the tourist catering industry (Vranešević T., Vignali C. Vrontis & D, 2004). The information is conceptual and hierarchical perspective, a broader term that is superior to the data. As one of the fundamental forces of the modern developed society, information has an attribute that does not have any other resource in economic development: inconsumable is, using is not reduced. The aim of this paper is to determinate main market research methods in hospitality.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF MARKET RESEARCH THROUGH THE INTERNET

The Internet is becoming an increasingly important source of secondary data, because it is the most cost-efficient medium for the research process. The best way to find information on the Internet is to know the exact web address URL (Uniform Resource Locator), that provides the desired information. To create greater awareness of the web address, the same is being promoted through offline channels (advertising on vehicles, billboards, business documents).The amount of web addresses, and the amount of informations on the Internet on a daily basis increases in high speed (206,675,938 *web* addresses in the world) ((Netcraft, 2010). Some of those informations are free which facilitates their detection and availability. During the research of informations on the Internet attention should be given to the following questions:

- Is the information accurate?
- Is the information up-to-date?
- Is the information outdated?
- Which methods of sampling were used during their research?

In practice, there are many methods of primary researches which can be performed online (client satisfaction survey, survey feedback for new products in the market, etc.). Conducting primary online research starts with quality web site analysis, so some questions should be taken into consideration:

- Are the objectives clearly set up web page?
- Is the mission of the company clearly communicated?

- How is the effectiveness of offline promotion in relation to the number of visitors?
- What kind of changes could be done to improve the quality of services on the web?
- Is the site user friendly?
- How much the sales increased as a result of online contacts?
- How many visitors returns to the site?
- How the online sale is?
- What is the quality of website over the competition?

According to this questions, there are five specific categories of measurement proposed:

- Promotion channels analysis includes informations about getting consumers to a website. Key questions are: From which page did they come? Which offline adds they saw?
- Consumer behavior analysis on the web refers to most visited sections and the time spent on the site, which suggests opportunities for modifying the structure and the content of the page.
- Satisfaction rating visitors analysis evaluates the level of perceived quality of online service, such as the number of answered e-mail questions.There, it is possible to use tools such as Gomez (www.gomez.com) for comparing (benchmark) with xsa competing sites.
- Online sales revenue analysis measure the relation between the number of those who have left the site without purchasing regarding to those who have concluded the swap process online.

3. APPLICATION METHODS FOR HOSPITALITY MARKET RESEARCH

Methods which are commonly conducted in online researches in hospitality industry are: (George, 2002):

- Specialized software
- Web registration
- Questionnaire
- Online focus groups
- Computer Kiosk-Based Interviewing
- Internet panels
- Cookies
- Mystery shopping.

Specialized software tools are used to measure the effectiveness of web sites (web analytics). Such tools are available for applying via the Web in a free versions or in a payment. There are two main technological approaches to collecting data for web analytics.

The first method, the analysis of log files, works in a way to peruse the log files in which the server records all transactions to extract the data. Page tagging is the second method, which is used by Java Script on every page which is followed to inform the third party server when the page is loaded in web browser (Ružić; Biloš & Turkalj, 2009).

As an examples of that kind of software tools it is possible to specify the Google Analytics and the Hitbox. Google Analytics is a web analytics which provide detailed attendance website and its marketing effectiveness. The tool is free and very easy to use and has gained wide application in the tourist-catering practice. Tool presents a number of variables, the number of new visitors (unique visitor), visitors who come back to the site (returning visitor), the most popular feature on the site, visitations of the site and length of each section, segmentation of users, etc. Another important feature of this tool is the option of monitoring results in a relation to it's marketing objectives. It provides the e-marketers the important results, which are implemented furthermore in a new marketing strategies on the Internet or they are compared with the leading companies in practice (benchmarking). As well as previously explained tool, Hitbox also belongs to a category of e-products and it is applicable in all industrial sectors for the monitoring of the effectivevess of the web site.

Fig. 1. Google Analytics

The questionnaire is the basic instrument of market research. It consists a series of questions asked to the respondent via the Internet, and the space for answers which are typed and marked by click by the respondent. Carefully compiled questionnaire is essential for the success of any research. Questions must be prepared to come up with informations which are set out as targets of a specific research study. Questions must be set up clearly, understandable and geared to specific goals. Researchers must define the objectives before they attempt to put together a questionnaire, because the objectives determines the content of each question and the level of details. Usually there are three types of questions: open questions, dichotomous and multiple choice questions. In preparing the questionnaire the scales are used as a measuring tool to determine the quantitative indicators of research.

Tools for creating and conducting surveys are very simple to use, for example, www.freeonlinesurveys.com, www.surveyshare.com / forms / questionnaire.html, etc. They provide the possibility of creating the questions, collecting the datas, analyzing the results and printing the final reports. Recommendation which is necessary to take into consideration is the length of the survey, because, if the survey is too long, it can happen non-response.

Online focus groups are forms of testing which are still in development phase, while in countries like the U.S. they are already widely spread.Such kind of a discussion is organized by the company, and by the Internet the samples of consumers are gathered in a real time in which they communicate and answer the questions.This is like brainstorming in which people generate ideas, while the process is led by the moderator.

Computer Kiosk-Based Interviewing is an innovative form of market research supported by digital technology. It's aim is to explore sale's experience, and it is usually carried out within the major shopping centers.

Internet panel represents a permanent representative sample of households that are continually built and maintained. Such a database is a technologically advanced form of connecting virtually unlimited number of characteristics or variables in a dynamic system. The concept of databases is known for ages, however, now includes high technology which enables companies to identify, differentiate, interact and personalize relationships with large customers while, increasing the efficiency of such systems (Stone & Jacobs, 2001).

A cookie is an information which web server stores on the web which writes it in a text file on your computer. This usually happens during the first visiting, or in filling out various forms and login to the websites. This text file (cookie) your browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox) sends the web server every time you ask his website. A cookie contains informations about the user and it's main purpose is to present options from the web site personalized to him.

Mystery Shopping is a technique that is increasingly used in e-marketing. As an example it is possible to specify www.emysteryshopper.com.Secret e-shoppers have a task to test the selected web page through this: utility, updating, response time and impact on the brand.Except these techniques, there are traditional techniques of market research which in greater or smaller measure use contemporary tehnologies.

Application of appropriate research methods depends primarily on the problem under investigation. Testing can be done in four basic ways of communicating with the subjects: a personal study, postal questionnaires, telephone testing and testing by computer. (CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interveiwing) or Wats (Wide Area Telecommunications Service), CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interveiwing) CSAQ (Computerized Self-Administered Questionnaires), or CII (Computer Interactive Interveiwing) and CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interveiwing). Computer technology and various software solutions are used in interviewing respondents and collecting data.

4. CONCLUSION

Market research is a key element of the marketing information in tourism. It connects consumers, clients and the public with the company using the information. Marketing opportunities analysis, in which the swap process is carried out on the tourism market is based on market research. It is the essence and the core of decision making system in marketing management. Any attempt to a comprehensive definition of market research must describe the role and the purpose in which the research is set.

5. REFERENCES

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