

THE INTEGRATION OF ECO-MANAGEMENT IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

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Abstract: *In recent years, the owners of accommodation establishments, the tour operators and also the travelers have become more aware of the impact that tourism has on the environment. Many organizations are in the process of changing; their daily actions reflect the need to minimize the environmental footprint. Thus, if at a macroeconomic level the concept of sustainable development is used to illustrate the link between the economy, technological development and social environment, at a microeconomic level the eco-management concept is used. Starting from the requirements of environmental development and the global experience in implementing methods, techniques, standards of organization and management of a hotel business, a number of objectives and eco-management requirements can be decoded / identified.*

Key words: *eco-management, environment, hotel, certification*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hotel eco-management applies all rules, beliefs and values operating in any successful organization. This management system addresses all hotel units and was designed to help organizations reduce their negative environmental impact regarding the activities they develop.

Analyzing specifically the tourism industry and its size and high growth rates, on one hand and that the environment is its primary determinant; this brings us to the focus the need for sustainable development in line with global developments for tourism.

1.1. The Objectives of Hotel Applied Eco-management

Economic and social objectives of tourism in general and the hotel unit in particular, depend mainly on how they are run, by management activities. At the same time, reporting on recent developments and mainly the increased awareness to environmental issues requires the implementation of appropriate strategies to integrate the eco-management in the current hotel activities. This should be included in all compartments and involve the human resource as a whole.

Current sustainable policies and strategies of hotel organizations should include, in one form or another: a set of its own sustainable objectives, redistribution of power and authority according to the new objectives, expectations about the functions or new sustainable duties, widened communication channels for new sustainable objectives, but also modern methods of achieving general objectives, which are classified and sustainable.

The eco-management activity in hotels is closely linked to the concern of protecting the planet and it involves: governmental and nongovernmental organizations, private companies and individuals, in good cooperation to ensure that tourism is planned and regulated, that can control its impact on nature and reduce resource consumption. Where hotel work is carefully and properly managed, the role of eco-management gets priority.

Forecasting and possibly quantifying the future development of economic and ecological phenomena in nature

is another objective of particular importance in the activity of hotel units.

1.2. New Human Resource Requirements for the Implementation of Eco-management

The human factor, through the role played by innovation, creative use and handling of information, organization and management, becomes the fundamental factor for the ecological development.

The staff must know the basics of environmental problems and to build reflexes that should include for example, lights off, stop heating appliances or air conditioning in unoccupied rooms, etc.

It is preferable to increased emphasis on environmental qualification of employees, to employee creativity to find solutions to problems such as efficient use of energy and raw materials, recycling waste and minimize pollution "at source" rather than to pay increased eco-taxes (environmental taxes). The funds thus saved can be used in the future development of the enterprise (firm). It thus combines economic efficiency with environmental effectiveness [1].

1.3. Ecomanagement Instruments Used in Monitoring and Controlling the Environmental Impact of Hotel Activity

This is represented by environmental audit and environmental monitoring.

Environmental audit is a systemic evaluation, documented, periodic and objective, of the way the hotel, the management and equipment works in order to help protect the environment through management control techniques, and to allow estimation of the extent to which these practices meet the organization's environmental policy. Areas covered in the environmental audit are: environment, mining safety, occupational health, product safety, human resource.

Environmental monitoring is a set of operations on: monitoring, forecasting and warning in order to maintain the operational involvement of environmental balance. Environmental monitoring as a tool of managerial work in the hotel is designed to ensure information flow, structured on departments and interdepartments. Programs of environmental impact should consider a permanent review of the ecomanagement system. To monitor the efficiency of environmental management, decision-makers on different hierarchical levels, and also the means of achievement are taken into account.

1.4. Eco-Hotel Contribution to the Conservation of Biodiversity

One of the most dangerous consequences of man's anti-ecological activity, is that the biosphere loses its ability to self regulate vis-à-vis the enormous amount of waste that pollutes the environment and the most dangerous consequence of this phenomenon is the irreversible disappearance of a considerable number of species, plants, animal or of microorganisms. Biosphere degradation leads to a considerable reduction in quality of life.

Implementation of good environmental practices in the business of a hotel, including the use of biological resources in a more sustainable way, can lead to positive benefits of the business itself, but also a major contribution to biodiversity conservation [2].

The actions on biodiversity preservation are variable, primarily depending on the laws of the country where the hotel activities take place, secondly on the basis of the current state of pollution of those touristic destinations, and also the involvement of local public bodies and local community. The funds allocated to reforestation, continuing and intensifying scientific research activities in the field of eco-management, promoting and supporting education and information regarding the importance of biodiversity conservation, to residents, employees and customers, development of endangered plant and animal farms, development of promotional material to highlight the importance of endangered species in the area where maintaining the balance with nature is the main concern.

Continuation and intensification of actions that have led so far, to the existence in most areas, of a valuable population of fauna and flora are encouraged by responsible actions in the tourism industry.

Because of these benefits, the eco-hotel brand is emerging in the hospitality industry, with all the advantages stemming from this approach [3]:

Attractiveness for consumers - tourists is increasingly motivated by sustainability and contribution to biodiversity conservation, the desire to live in healthy environments and healthy product to consume.

Reducing costs - best practices for biodiversity can reduce operating costs by reducing the costs of resource acquisition, use and even eliminate certain costs.

Improving destination quality - destinations rich in biodiversity are attractive places for tourists. Taking into consideration the quality of the customers as well as the way recreational offers take into account the biodiversity, an improvement in the tourist destination quality may occur.

Improving employee productivity and sense of responsibility towards the environment - employees are often highly motivated in actions to conserve biodiversity, thus contributing to their labor productivity growth, the loyalty, thereby reducing personnel costs.

Ensuring the operating license of a hotel - good practical implementation of biodiversity management that demonstrates that the hotel cares about the environment and leads a responsible business. Regarding this, the hotel can be supported by government, local institutions, employees and even local community.

Attracting investment from socially responsible investors - investors want social responsibility to make sure their funds are invested in enterprises concerned with protecting the environment.

1.5. Eco-management Certification – A New Instrument Used in Hotel Management Policies

This includes high costs generated by the implementation of practices and clean technologies. The appearance of eco-management in the ISO 12000 international standards, ISO 14000 and ISO 19000 and European directives on EMAS (Eco Management Audit Scheme - Audit Scheme eco-management) demonstrates the importance of this management system in developing modern enterprise, involving both costs of further implementation as well as certification. As in other fields of activity, volunteer certification organisms have appeared to support the development of environmental management systems in the hospitality industry have occurred. A well known certification organism is represented by TÜV Rheinland Group and its contribution is valued as one of the most prestigious and powerful worldwide certification organisms that have a product certification in hotel eco-management, namely,

“Eco-Hotel Management System Eco Hotel certification system was developed specifically for the hotel segment, adapted to market realities, symbolizing the best way to gain international recognition. This exclusive standard adds importance to the hotel unit and shows its alignment with global environmental requirements.

At the microeconomic level, the differentiation between management and eco-management is not significant. The obvious difference occurs when goals are centered on a hotel organization and economic development not only on an economic development.

2. CONCLUSION

This paper underlines the advantages of eco-management implementation and the benefits represented by the use of best practices, as an effective way to increase the international competitiveness of the organizations.

With a high degree of pollution and climate change it is obvious that each social sector should play a more active role in reducing the negative impact of its actions and strive for sustainability.

Sustainable development as a paradigm of progress, has radically changed international actions priorities, from a limited participation of local actors and dominated by narrow interest groups, to a holistic approach, which now involves not only the decision-making fora, but also public awareness, in an attempt to restart development and direct it towards what should be of interest: the future of the planet and of the human species at least in terms of normality.

Regardless of all costs and budgets applied, depending on size of organization and the degree of technology, the application of environmental management systems demonstrated their effectiveness by measuring the environmental performance of hotel organizations.

Specificity and particularities arise from the nature of sustainable tourism economic impact on tourist destinations and regions, but also due to direct contact between customers and local community environment.

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