



MODULE_4 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Lesson_6_ NEXT STEPS

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The creation of positive experiences represents the very essence of the hospitality and tourism industry and it is very important to create a **meaningful customer experience**. That could give competitive advantage and bring satisfied customers. Companies should be ready to face the challenge of creating meaningful customer experience. Consistent information collection is in the core of producing personalized customer experiences. That means the need for information collection in all stages, before, during and after the travel. Enabling this information should be collected from consumers and stored at the company's data base platform. This platform unifies information and interactions of the hotel and its guests. That happens through entire customer. Guests are asked to share a range of hotel-specific preferences to enable a tailor-made experience including things like room comfort and preferences on meals.

Currently most of travelers are demanding authentic **local customer experiences**, which are experientially oriented involving more meaningful interactions with locals. This desire expressed by tourist could be connected to the thinking and model of experience economy (Pine and Gilmore 1998.) The idea is that experiences are ways of understanding interactions between people and places. It shows how each individual understands and interprets them in different way. The core is authenticity and key feature of the sharing and experience economies.

1. Meaningful and personalized customer experience

Customer experience is holistic in nature and happens with the direct or indirect contact with the service provider. Holistic **customer experience** consists of customer's affective, emotional, cognitive, social, and physical responses. They exist in several touchpoints during the entire customer journey. Customer experience both elements created by the service provider and elements that the service provider can't control, like other customers, use of mobile devices or operations in a hotel are such as reservations, reception actions, breakfast service and housekeeping. During all those situations the business and the consumer meet and interact. For the facilitation of service encounters and guest experiences

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all employees are empowered to access. This could be done through computers and portable mobile devices. From the point of the quests a-priori information is collected through a personally set up website for guests. This common platform and the information that it brings, enables producing personalized guest experience, meeting the needs and preferences of the tourist consume.

2. Local tourism experience

One way of making a study for memorable **local customer experience** is MTES. The Memorable Tourism Experience Scale (MTES) is useful methodology. There are seven factors within MTES, and they are hedonism, novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaningfulness, involvement, and knowledge. These factors could be represented by several items; for example, local culture is comprised of three items (local people in destination behaving friendly, good impressions about the local people and closely experienced the local culture).

Practical example is shown on visitor's desire for authenticity within the holiday experience containing food. Beside that it is usually connected to the sustainable tourism experience. Both of these could show the important role of local food. What would be preferred is, that local foods are conceptualised as "authentic" products. In that case they can symbolise the place and culture of the destination. The result would be that "local food" enhances the visitor experience by connecting consumers to the region and its perceived culture and heritage.

In broader meaning this interest to local food could contribute to increased food tourism. The positive outcomes which are followed, are interest and the retention and development of regional identity. It could bring as well increased sustainability thinking and actions and the enhancement of environmental awareness. Increased demand and production of local food and the conservation of traditional heritage, skills, and ways of life. Those are the social and cultural benefits which benefit the local community.

Conclusions

There is high correlation between customer experience and loyalty, which could be contributed to a better profitability of the company. Personalized services and products are the ones that meet customer's individual requirements. Using different data analytics makes it possible to meet more and more the individual needs of customer. By using data

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



Co-funded by the
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of the European Union



companies can get to know each of their customers better. What are their intentions, and where, when, and how they engage with the brand? When specific preferences and needs of customer segments have been identified, company can create personalized marketing messages, tailored discounts, product recommendations based on previous purchases, and so on. Even though there are plenty of automated tools that help to support customers, human interaction should never be overlooked. If customers feel that they cannot get through to any human, even if they try to, they can find it frustrating and impersonal.

Personalizing content helps to get much closer to the customers and to build a stronger and longer lasting bond with them. When customers feel that they are getting service that is tailored just for them, they become more satisfied and loyal which boost their brand advocacy.

Many travellers want to experience travel destinations more authentically, like local people and avoid known tourist attractions. They are interested in sites and events that display local culture. In order to serve their customers well, destination managers need to know local people well: what they like to do and where they are spending time. So, it is important to really find out how local people see their neighbourhood and what they think is special in it. Before you can offer live like a local experience you really need to know how the locals live.

It can be difficult to find things that benefit both local people and tourists. Tourism can boost local identities, create jobs, and help the economy, but tourist flows can also have negative effect. Some places can lose their meaning to locals when becoming a tourist attraction. Therefore, it is important that service providers treat both, tourists, and locals as customers, and pay attention to both by developing enjoyable places for both groups.

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership 2018-1-ES01-KA204-050711



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