

The Importance of Personal Selling on Tourism Management

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Abstract: In tourism enterprises the aim of sale enhancement efforts is to draw attention of potential tourist, to inform about tourism enterprises, to stimulate the request of purchasing and to achieve the sale of touristic product. In tourism, the efforts of sale enhancement are performed via promotion methods like personal selling, advertisement, presentation and public relations. Since the element of tourism is the human's service to the human, the obligation of consumption in the place of production and the necessity of face communication makes personal selling important for tourism enterprises. Every employee who has one-to-one communication with tourist also contributes to the marketing of touristic product. In this study, the importance of personal selling on tourism marketing is explained.

Definition of marketing

Marketing, generally, contains all the activities taken place in order to transport the produced goods to the aimed consumer. In developed countries, marketing activities play an important role in enterprise activities. Transporting the produced goods or service with the most suitable marketing activity is aimed. There are various definitions of marketing in the related literature, depending on the background of the definer. Below is presented some of them:

“Marketing, basically, is the exchange process that is intended for meeting people's needs and demands. One side from the two or more sides gives something to the other side, and in turn takes something else which is valuable, in order to meet their own needs.” (MUCUK, 1994)

“Marketing is the activity system that is intended for planning, promoting, and transporting in order to present the goods or services that are satisfactory for the demands of the present and potential consumers.” (STANTON, 1981)

“Marketing is performing the enterprise tasks that direct the producer to consumer or to user traffic of goods and services that are aimed to satisfy the consumers and to meet enterprise goals.” (McCARTHY, 1994)

American Marketing Association defines marketing as: “Marketing is the process of planning and applying the attempts of creating, pricing, transporting and promoting the goods, services and ideas, in order to provide the exchange relevant to the goals of people and organizations.” (MUCUK, 1994)

According to the definition of Philip Kotler, marketing is, “a set of activities for reaching the organizational goals, and intended to provide the exchanges in the aimed markets.” (KOTLER, 2003)

“Marketing can be expressed as an exchange that takes place between dealers and consumers. In this process, the aim of the marketing is transporting the goods and services to consumer that are suitable for the needs and demands of the consumer, in the proper time and place, with an appropriate price.” (ALTUNIŞIK, 2010)

The principle goal of marketing is to profit by satisfying the needs and demands of the aimed consumers and clients. Before starting to produce, enterprises must make marketing a function of producing by doing a Market research. Marketing continues after producing, before the sale, and after the sale. Also, it is important to consider social needs besides consumer and client needs. This is needed so as to complete the goals and missions of the enterprise in the long run. Thus, marketing is the planning, managing, and controlling task of the marketing components that would profit or benefit by satisfying the demands and needs of the producer, consumer and society. (Avcıkurt, 2010)

Tourism Marketing

Tourism is a rapidly improving sector. For this reason, it is also an important source of income for national economy. Tourism marketing is gradually developing owing to the increase in the competition in tourism sector, diversity and complexity of tourism markets, and increasing consciousness of consumers. Number of polite and

conscious people who got used to dine outside their houses is rapidly increasing, comparing to past. These people want to realize their holiday experiences, achieve new experiences, and thrive culturally. Present-day holidaymakers are more selective when selecting touristic enterprises. Appealing these people to enterprise is only possible by giving more qualified tourism services, and more tactful marketing applications. (RIZAOĞLU, 2004)

There are many definitions about tourism marketing. The most extensive and accepted of all is the made by World Tourism Organization. According to this definition; "Tourism marketing is a management philosophy that, in accordance with the aim of a tourism marketing or touristic station, aims to make research, estimation and selection about the product by considering the features of tourism demands in order that tourism product takes a good place in the market, and the decisions made about the subject matter." (İÇÖZ, 1996)

It's the overall task related to the transportation of the touristic goods directly or via tourism agents, in the local, regional, national, or international framework, from the producer to tourist, the last consumer, and creating the desire about the touristic consuming needs. According to this definition, tourism marketing is the efforts about the presentation and sale of the goods and services that would meet the tourists' needs. Touristic goods and services can be sold to tourists, directly by the producing touristic enterprises, or resellers, travelling agents, or tour operators. It is essential in tourism marketing to research and know what the tourists' new needs are. (HACIOĞLU, 2000)

It can be said that, the reason that products presented in tourism industry has individual features can be related to both touristic supply and demand, and the fact that tourism industry is resultant of different sectors. In tourism industry, mostly, service is presented. Basic features of services can be listed as: (1) to be abstract, (2) inherence of production and consumption, (3) its change depending on the producer and consumer of the service, and its change depending on place and time, and (4) not to be able to stock up. (KOTLER, 2003)

Touristic Product

Touristic product is a whole that consists of the products and services that can meet the consumers' needs. From this aspect, touristic product can be only one product or service (such as suntan lotion, a plane seat), or a combination of product and service that can meet the needs many times (such as accommodation, food service), or a package that includes all (a tour that includes ticket sale, guidance service, transportation, accommodation, food service, entertainment). (OLALI & ALP, 1986)

In definitions of touristic product, the key point was the touristic product's combined feature. The reason that touristic product has a combined feature is that there are many elements that consists it. These elements can be listed as:

- Natural, cultural, historical, artistic values and having of the country or the region that appeals tourists,
- Enterprises, hotels, motels, restaurants, entertainment and sports facilities, and travelling agents that serve to tourists,
- Travelling enterprises that would provide the opportunity for the tourists to reach their destinations,
- The combined structure of the touristic product, the elements it includes, the consumer audience that it aims, differentiates touristic product from other industry products. (HACIOĞLU,1996)

That people are the subject of tourism, the obligation of consuming the touristic products where they are produced, and requirement for face-to-face relationship and behaviors, make individual selling an important fact for tourism businesses. It contributes the marketing of the product, and becomes a part of the touristic product by interacting one by one with the tourist and providing the service. In other words, employee who directly gets into touch with enterprise is also included in the individual selling tasks. Thereby, employees must know the enterprise really good. As well as knowing enterprise's aims and goals, its culture, features of the market in which they work, changes and innovations, and what is the aimed people of the enterprise, their appearance, speech, attitude and behaviors increases their efforts regarding individual selling.

In tourism sector, in which human relations are the most intensive, the area the individual selling (alias individual selling) is most used is travelling agents. In travelling agents, where most of the tourism sector's sales are done, individual relations are gaining importance, as the competition increases.

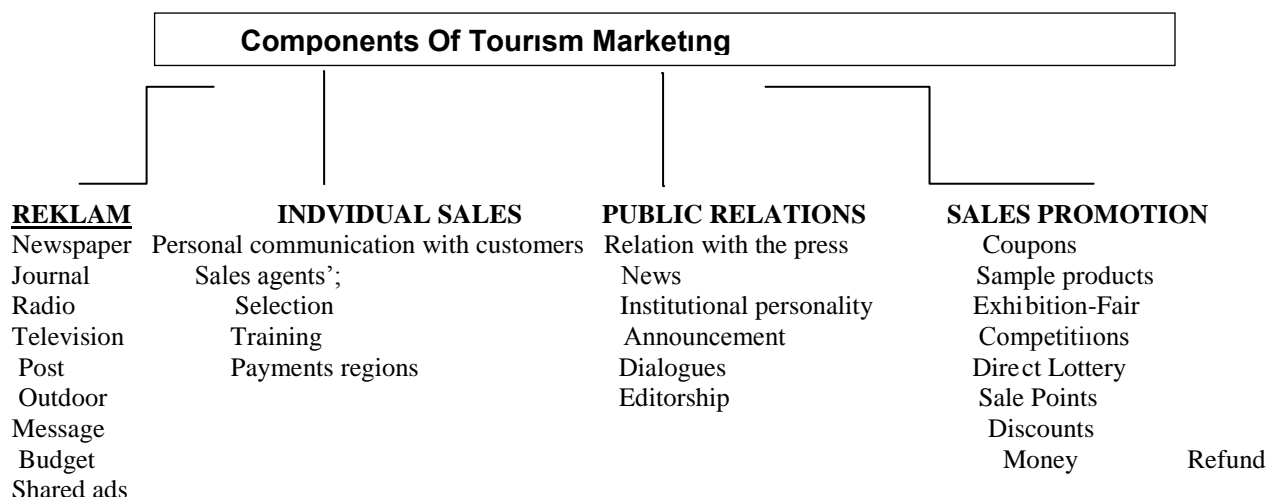
Marketing Touristic Product

As the touristic product is a product with high and flexible demand, tourism companies must have an organization that would be able to apply their sale increasing efforts. The aim of the sale increasing efforts in tourism companies are by attracting attentions of the tourists informing them about company products, by creating tend and desire to products and motivate them and make tourists buy their products. Sale increasing efforts in

tourism are done by individual selling, advertising, presentation, human relations and sales development tools. (Hacıoğlu, Avcıkurt, 2008)

In tourism, individual relationships gain importance as the main factor in tourism is people, and as automation does not take too much place in tourism. Individual selling that is done via speeches and meetings, face to face with potential consumers, is the most effective sale increasing effort.

In tourism companies, various sale increasing efforts are applied considering the policy of the company, features of the company, economical condition, competence environment, and the market in which it works, features of the tourists that it services. It's possible to show discounts that company applies to its clients under specific conditions or during specific times, gifts that are given to clients, outer services as examples for the sale increasing efforts. (İÇÖZ, 1996)



Source: ODABAŞI, 1995

Chart 1. Tourism Marketing Components

Individual Sale and its Importance

Individual sale is an element of promotion mixing. When developing individual sale strategy, marketing mixing elements are taken into account. Individual sale must be evaluated one by one, according to goods, price, distribution as well as other mixing strategies. In the past, individual sale employees and sale managers didn't have quite a role in goods planning and developing decisions. Based on the developing marketing concept, when deciding goods' feature and benefit, sale employees' knowledge is given a consideration as they are close to the market.

Individual sale is an effort aimed to selling, which is done by speaking, meeting, and concluding. For tourism companies, on the other hand, individual sale is an effort, spent by the sale employees, by meeting with potential customers to sell. Individual sale is a primary promoting technique for tourism companies. Marketing actions of touristic companies is mostly depended on the individual sale relationships. Because trip and tourism is an activity for people. In other words, trips and tourism require human relationships and behaviors that are performed face to face in all aspects. Touristic product can not be separated from the person who sells, presents, or serves it. Thereby, the success of the tourism company depends mostly on individual sale. (Avcıkurt, 2010).

Even though promoting techniques have their individual benefits and features, none of them can be replaced with individual sale. Also, the fact that tourism activity is an intensive effort required activity, it brings individual sale to the foreground. The fact that consumers have to go to the place where the service is presented, makes individual sale more important compared to the other elements of promoting techniques. (RIZAOĞLU, 2004) All marketing efforts are devoted by gathering together the sellers and buyer to provide buyers with knowledge about the products and to realize the sale. Even though buying process might seem to be easy, in fact it is a pretty complex process. Companies, in order to promote the product or/and services that they produced or present, they have to plan the promoting mixing elements systematically, and apply these plans, and check these applications. Individual selling is presenting the goods or services in such a short time, and is the effort done by meeting and speaking one by one in order to sell the product.

Consumer must be convinced to pay for the product or service. And in order to be convinced, feeling of the customer who will try the product or service for the first time must change. Considering the fact that feelings about the products are hard things to change, sale employee facilitates the consumers' information gaining process, by providing customer-product knowledge. Thereby, s/he provides the environment for the feeling change. During the sale introduction, by asking questions and including the customer in the communication process, s/he provides the opportunity for the customer to clear the question marks in mind. Sale representative, as well as determining the demands and needs of the customer, has the possibility to state customer's interests and values. And then, it is easier for a customer whose attitudes and values are taken into account, and who receives a message according to his/her demands and needs, to be convinced. (OBERHAUS, 1993)

Customer, first gives a look at the quality of the service, and by evaluating the criteria such as suitability (time, price, installments, sale point etc.), ease of use, ease of access, delivery speed, and effective distribution, decides whether the service is appropriate to pay for or not. For this reason, it is necessary to know that the customer wants and to reflect this knowledge to business action. In this respect, it is necessary that companies create a competency advantage by presenting customer values as a priority, as well as creating a difference. (YAMAMOTO, 2003)

The key point about customer loyalty is satisfying the customer. A satisfied customer, keeps paying for a long time, as the company creates new services and improves the present ones, pays more, makes compliments about the company and its services, does not mind other companies and their services, and does not mind price, gives recommendations to the company about new services. As the process cost falls into a groove, serving the present customers is much easier than finding new customers. (KOTLER, 2003)

As it is clear in the statements above, individual selling is vitally important for providing consumers' permanency, and making chain-sells. Another important fact here is the sale employee who will realize the sale.

Aims of the sale employee are briefly:

- Contributing the image of the company and brand
- Increasing consumers dependence to both brand and their choice
- Providing the opportunity for the product and brand to be distinguished
- Providing the opportunity to reach more and exclusive customers
- Realizing sale by convincing the customer and maintain it.
- Providing customer satisfaction and increasing it
- Providing the appropriate service for the customer
- Increasing the frequency and quantity of sale. Earning more to the company.
- Increasing the knowledge about the products and services
- Creating a conscious customer audience
- Supporting postsale services.

When realizing the aims of the company and promoting activities, individual selling aims we mentioned are devoted to increase the sales volume. In this respect, aims such as conserving market share and trying to enlarge it, catching the sales value that can increase the profit, earning new customers with certain specifications, detecting individual sale expenses must be regarded.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Individual Sale

Advantages

Individual sale has some aspects that are superior to other mixing elements. The superior aspects can be summarized as: (KOZAK, 2006)

- 4.1.1. Can directly communicate with customers.
- 4.1.2. Can keep customers' attentions up
- 4.1.3. As it counts on face to face communication, provides the opportunity to observe the reactions right away.
- 4.1.4. Mutual communication is possible.
- 4.1.5. Can reveal customer's individual needs
- 4.1.6. Can focus on the subjects that customers are sensitive about
- 4.1.7. Can have friendship with their customers.

Disadvantages

- Its scope is limited. In certain time, few customers can be contacted.

- It's costly. For customers who are untidy geographically, it is costly to contact each customer.
- It's long-term. It's not short-term, long and constant. Specifically, requires an application whose selling power is planned.

Individual Selling's Leading Customers to Buy

There are two sides in individual selling: Seller and buyer (customer). Firstly, for a successful sale, a good sale teams required. For this reason, we will investigate the features that a sale employee must have. In the other phase, behavior of the customer or client who is on the other side of the marketing will be investigated. For a successful sale, we need to know the customer well, and plan the sale process according to this fact. As our subject is individual sale and marketing in travelling agents, touristic customer behavior will be stressed.

Qualifications of Sale Employee

In individual sale, face to face communication is the subject matter. Hence, sale employees play a vital role for individual sale. Nowadays, companies that are aware of the importance of human relations must pay attention to selecting suitable employee for creating their sale power.

The sale employees selected haphazardly without training about profession flat out and prevent company from having a competence advantage. Travelling agents, like other companies, must pay attention to some specifications in sale employees who will work in marketing and sale department.

Individual sale skill is important. But promotion and advertising, is not enough to succeed. These are rather useful for attracting attention. At this point, sale employee takes to the stage and follows through. For this reason, intelligence, experience, education and some human psychology is required for travel consultant. A talented employee is able to turn a little curiosity to a deal, to create other little tours other than main trip (cross selling), to save hesitant investments. A weak sale employee, on the other hand, is like a drug for all companies. After the improvement of service, advertisement, and all other works, careless, rude, or inadequate presentation might easily cause customer to go back. (REILLY, 1987)

Individual sale team travels very often to find potential clients and keep present clients. While working, they spend too much time and effort. And this increases the expense of the activities. But, marketer, as s/he communicates with the client face to face, can instantly evaluate the reactions and interests about the product. And thereby, can instantly answer customers' questions and replies to their objections and can follow through.

Touristic Consumer

When marketing any product or service, the first thing to take into consideration is the fact that not everyone is the buyer we are looking for. The first thing we try to do is, on the other hand, detecting people who can possibly our clients. Later on, getting to know potential clients in detail, and developing strategies according to these details.

every consumer is not same. Everybody has different feature. As well as they can be financial, cultural, interests, age, health condition they can also be personal features. Touristic consumers form the focus of the tourism marketing activities. People who buy or have a tendency to buy all the tourism goods which are produced in tourism companies and tourism regions; on the other hand people who join the tourism activities are called touristic consumers.

In tourism market sale it is quite important to be a good listener as well as an effective speech. A good sale employee must listen to the customer carefully. Too much speaking sometimes affects person or people in a negative way. That everybody has a different view must be taken into consideration. To control its truth, the comments of person who is speaking must be repeated in the process of speaking. Repeating what he or she says in a simple way shows that speaking is paid attention, understood, and given importance to the person. In tourism market, asking many questions to customers their needs are detected and must be presented alternative products.

Conclusion

It is very important for all companies that produce goods or services, to increase income through selling. A business that can't increase its income can't obtain its persistence because the primary goal of business is to get some income by selling goods or kinds of service. Today, in which we face and increase in competition and in service sector which doesn't have opportunity to stockpile, selling and marketing activities gain importance. For selling to

occur, businesses need a valuable marketing path. It's very hard to reach expected market ratio for a business which doesn't give any importance to marketing path for selling, no matter how king goods or service it produces. Personnel that is responsible for selling is also very important for marketing and selling policies to function correctly. Selling personnel is required to have necessary information and abilities. Especially in tourism sector, in which there is an abstract service and goods that cannot be checked beforehand, quality of personnel gains more importance.

In struggles for tourism sector to market and have a persistence one of the most important factor is individual selling. Individual selling contribute to process of a customer's decision by one by one and personal communication. In tourism business every personnel that faces customers is like a selling staff. They can sell all the products outside their department or can inform customers about those products. So, they can contribute to selling success.

Individual selling process is a complex process which begins with potential consumer's buying a product, and after selling, analyzing the consumer's satisfaction level. Thereby, a good and well-informed selling personnel gains customer loyalty for latter periods.

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