

Green Marketing Activities Of Green Star Hotels In Concept Of Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Due to increasing of global warming, the activities and studies about environmental consciousness and environmentally awareness are adopted by green star hotels and concept of sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly important in this context. Environmentally-friendly hotels or green star hotels have social responsibility consciousness to protect the environment by creating and developing economical solutions by hotel management for water and energy storing and reducing the solid wastes. Nowadays, both hotel managers and visitors pleasure in doing works environmentally responsible. While the hotel managers are adopting environmentally-friendly construction, visitors (tourists) are behaving more environmentally-friendly about holiday plans and shopping. It is indicated that, the number of tourists who consider green star criteria while selecting the hotels are increasing and at last decades, environmentally-friendly tourism have enormously increased. The aim of this study is to expose green marketing activities of green star hotels in Turkey. In this context, the activities of green star hotels have been examined and viewpoints of the visitors about green marketing have been retained. In this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used together. Deep - interviews were done with hotel managers also the questionnaires were used to get information about the awareness of visitors about green star hotels and green marketing activities.

Keywords: Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism, Green Star Hotel, Green Marketing, Green Consumer

1.INTRODUCTION

Hotel company managers increasingly have to take environmental issues into account. A major number of typical vacation touristic events are directly dependent on the natural resources at a destination. Some planning consequences attempt to achieve higher levels of environmental sustainability at the destination. Tourism planning is to try to attract consumers who are intrinsically interested in protecting the environment and consequently behave in a way that leads

to a smaller ecological footprint. Several authors have suggested this alternative approach and recommended that it may be suitable to reduce the ecological footprint of tourism at destinations. (Dolnicar and Leisch 2008)

2.GREEN STAR CONCEPT DEFINITION

Today in tourism we find different eco-labels. In fact, obtainment of the eco-label exhibits the commitment of tourism suppliers towards sustainable development and environment improvements. There are several eco-labels in hotel sector, such as The Green Key. Similarly, The Green Star is one of the them. Hotel eco-labels create image of caring and friendly tourism organizations and, at the same time, inform tourists about sustainable orientation of tourism product and promote them. Suppliers can also develop guidelines for social responsible development. Green star hotel awards are an environmentally friendly program. A lot of hotel companies can improve their image by being environmentally friendly. They can improve neutral image about social responsibility into a positive one by helping to improve environment. Green star hotel companies might invest in environmentally friendly energy systems. A great number hotels can plant trees to improve the environment. (Rudez 2009).

Eco-innovation and green star hotel practices are the new weapons for the progressive companies in tourism. Environmental improvements can enhance marketability and represent a potent source of innovation. Muntean and Stremtan (2008) tried to underline how important is for a hotel to develop sustainable eco-marketing strategy, called green star hotel practices. According to them Romanian hotels should ensure that eco-innovative efforts are communicated in all corporate environmental as well as responses to questionnaires from customers and socially responsible investors. The companies should make a public commitment to develop more eco-innovative products, and should ensure that commitments emanate from the highest level of the company. (Muntean and Stremtan 2008).

Rudez (2009) focused on loyalty programs in the hotel management and, further applies corporate social responsibility into loyalty programs. According to Rudez (2009) that joint donation, environmentally friendly practices and programs of care for people are proposed as social responsible loyalty. On the other hand many companies that sell tourism products are environmental unfriendly. Tribe (2005, Rudez 2009) classifies negative impacts of tourism. Environmental impacts are impacts on natural resources, pollution, physical impacts.

Song et al. (2012) introduced three environmentally related constructs. These are environmental concerns, perceived customer effectiveness, and environmentally friendly tourism behaviors. They examined the effect of environmentally friendly perceptions on the behavioral intention of visitors at a festival in South Korea. Environmentally friendly consumption behaviors are usually related to people's belief that their environmentally friendly actions to solving ecological problems. Therefore perceived customer effectiveness is a useful construct to understand

customer's environmentally conscious behaviors (Roberts, 1996). Namely, Straughan and Roberts (1999) stated that customers can be effective in resolving environmental problems tend to engage in more intense environmentally friendly behaviors with a high level of concern. (Song et al. 2012)

Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) have researched in India where the two examined attitudes and behavior towards green star hotel practices. They've used a number of research methodologies. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) have also used correlation and factor analysis. They've found that consumers were not only conscious of green star hotel practices. There were two main symptoms. The first symptom was the consumers' reluctance to sacrifice quality of service to stay at a green hotel, while the second was a refusal to pay more to stay at hotels which have adopted green star hotel practices. They brought to an end that a hotel could derive a competitive advantage from green practices however the hotel would have to take a longterm vision concerning any financial gains. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) also suggested that the government should institute rewards for and tax benefits to advance the entrenchment of green practices in the hotel sector in India. In addition, Kasim (2004) conducted a study in Penang Island, Malaysia. The purpose of this research was to examine tourists' attitudes towards business socio-environmental responsibility. The findings of the research were mixed, similar to Manaktola and Jauhari (2007). Kasim found that tourists practiced more business socio-environmental responsibility activities at home than while on vacation. It's also, the findings suggested that the tourists were not willing to make their hotel choice based on the business socio-environmental responsibility criteria's, nor were they willing to pay extra for the same. In each case the researcher found that the subjects had the knowledge and may have even cared about green star hotel practices. (Moreo 2008).

3.GREEN STAR APPLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD

In the world, green star applications are implemented generally and it is mentioned under the concept of eco-friendly hotels. They are giving names to the hotels which protect the environment and respect to natural environment as "green hotels" or "eco-friendly" hotels.

There are some organizations and councils about green hotels in the world. Especially about sustainable tourism, there is an organization and it is named as Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). GSTC is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world. Momentum around this movement is growing. The GSTC is currently active in all World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) regions, including Africa, The Americas, East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, Europe and Middle East (<http://new.gstccouncil.org/about/learn-about-the-gstc>). They have some criteria's to assess the hotels and tour operators. First criteria's were published in 2008 and three years later, in 2011, revised criteria's were published. GSTC has 37 criteria's, based on environment management system, water management, energy management, waste management, guest information, kitchen (food and beverages), housekeeping, garden and beach area, interior and exterior appearance, organized around four main themes as effective sustainability planning, maximizing social and economic benefits for

the local community, enhancing cultural heritage and reducing negative impacts to the environment. The criteria's which are offered by another organizations which inspect hotels about sustainable environment, use these criteria's to create their own check lists. Besides GSTC, another organizations and programs about sustainable environment and tourism are United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Union for Nature (IUCN), International Tourism Partnership (ITP), World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), Rainforest Alliance, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), European Environment Agency (EEA), Network Evolution for Sustainable Tourism (NEST), United Nations Foundation, DestiNet and Travelife. Travelife using 99 criteria's to assess the environmental operations in hotels and offering bronze, silver or gold awards depend on success of a hotel. There is an association about green hotels and named as "Green Hotels Association" in USA established in 1993. They have more than 50 member hotels all around the world but most of them locate in USA. This association aims to control waste management, protection of the natural environment and energy and water saving activities in hotels and consult them in these fields. There are over 800 different green certifications (<http://www.greenhotels.com>). Green Hotels Association is not offering "green star hotel certificate" to the hotels, instead of this, they are offering a guideline includes rules about how to protect the environment and the other subjects such as water, energy, waste management and air quality. The hotels have this guideline can have an opportunity to check all subjects mentioned above on-their-own and reduce management costs easily in these fields. There is a program named as "GreenHotelsGlobal" can provide metric-based information for the hotels. Hotels that use the Green Hotels Global program can accurately report to existing and prospective clients the carbon footprint; energy consumption; water usage and waste generation associated with room-night usage and event bookings. Green Hotels Global provides tracking of ongoing environmental progress in a standardized format, thereby establishing consistency, transparency and reportable metrics (<http://greenhotelsglobal.com/about.aspx>). With this program, hotels can assess the environmental subjects mentioned above and create reports includes the recent results regularly. With these reports, hotels can periodically benchmark them with each other and see the inefficient fields they have.

4.GREEN STAR HOTEL APPLICATIONS IN TURKEY

In Turkey, green star hotel applications are operated and inspected by The Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Ministry have 122 criteria's based on; "General Management", "Environmentally Training", "Arrangements in Rooms", "Compliance with Environment", "Energy Management", "Water Management", "Sanitizers, Hazardous Chemicals Management", "Waste Management" and "Other Services" All criteria's have special score board. If a hotel is being inspected have adequate total score, regarding the type of the hotel (3-star, 4 -star, 5-star), there is a certificate named as "The Certification of Environmentally Friendly Accommodation Establishment" is offered by Ministry since 2008 and it is renewed every two years. About adequate score, if a hotel is a 5-star holiday village, it should have minimum 330 points; or if it is 5-star hotel, it should have minimum 300 points to get this certificate. These total scores necessary for the certificate depend on the type of hotels. The Ministry aims to encourage the hotels to get this certificate. That's why they have special score table is divided into two groups as Resort Hotels and City Hotels. All hotels from 1-star to 5-star can apply for this certificate to

the Ministry. After getting Environmentally-Friendly Certificate, the color of the stars on the hotel-plate changes to green. That's why in Turkey, "Green Hotel" concept converts to "Green Star Hotel" concept. If a hotel is a member of the Ministry, to get this certificate they are not obligated to pay. There is no organization/association for Green Star Hotels in Turkey. Now, only the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is responsible for green star applications formally but the hotels can have certificates about environment or other subjects from other institutions if they have sufficient facilities inspected by them such as Travelife.

5.EVALUATION OF GREEN STAR HOTELS IN TURKEY

5.1The Aim and The Scope of Research

The aim of this study is to determine the total amount of green star hotels in Turkey and to see green star hotel applications particularly in Antalya. Only 11 green star hotels locate in Antalya are taken into consideration in these research.

Selecting Hotels and Data Collection

To evaluate the environmental activities of green star hotels, special questionnaire was prepared by regarding GSTC's, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism's and other organizations' assessment criteria's and had face-to-face interviews with hotel managers. Approximately 2 hours were spent at each hotel to get answers for questions and to take photos for some important environmental points.

5.2.Analyzing of Collected Data's

All data's collected from 11 green star hotels in Antalya were classified as energy management, water management, waste management and recycling; based on lobbies and opened areas, rooms, offices, kitchen and laundry areas and hotel operations. Besides that, environmentally training, certificates related to environment were analyzed. On another hand, questionnaires were prepared for visitors and tried to get answers for their knowledge about green star applications, why they chose the hotel they lodged and whether green star is affective on their decisions or not, the visuals show environmental activities by the hotel enough for the visitors or not, if they would like to participate to these activities or not etc. were analyzed.

6.FINDINGS

6.1.The Total Number of Green Star Hotels

In Turkey, with regarding the fact sheet of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, "Calista Luxury Resort Hotel" is the first Green Star Hotel in Turkey and now there are 23 green star hotels have environmentally-friendly certificate (See Table 1).

Table 1. Dispersion of all Green Star Hotels in Turkey

No	Hotels	City	n	%
1	Amara Dolce Vita	Antalya	11	48
2	Calista Luxury Resort Otel	Antalya		
3	Club Hotel Rixos Tekirova	Antalya		
4	Concorde De Luxe Resort	Antalya		
5	Xanadu Resort Hotel	Antalya		
6	Otium Eco Club Side	Antalya		
7	Crystal Palace Resort Kemer Otel	Antalya		
8	Crystal Hotels Flora Beach	Antalya		
9	Crystal Sunrise Queen Luxury Resort & Spa	Antalya		
10	Crystal Palace Family Resort	Antalya		
11	Crystal Paraiso Verde Resort & Spa	Antalya		
12	Crowne Plaza Istanbul Asia	Istanbul	5	22
13	Four Seasons Hotel	Istanbul		
14	The President Hotel	Istanbul		
15	The Sofa Otel	Istanbul		
16	Holiday Inn Istanbul City	Istanbul		
17	Ersan Tatil Koyu Bodrum	Muğla	2	9
18	Hilton Dalaman Golf Resort & Spa	Muğla		
19	Antakya Ottoman Palace Thermal Resort	Antakya	1	4
20	Dedeman Hotel Konya	Konya	1	4
21	Tuğcan Hotel	Gaziantep	1	4
22	DoubleTree by Hilton Avanos Kapadokya	Nevşehir	1	4
23	Dedeman Hotel Sanliurfa	Şanlıurfa	1	4
		TOTAL	23	100

There are 11 green star hotels, %48 of total number of green star hotels in Turkey, locate Antalya as you see on the table above. These hotels are intensively locate in Belek, Beldibi, Tekirova, Lara, Side and Kemer. Belek is the most intensive region for green star hotels as %36 of total hotels in Antalya. Because in Belek, hotels have large green area and also most of these hotels are suitable for golf sports.

6.2. Range the Trends in Green Star Hotels

Hotels have being inspected since 2008 by the Ministry. In 2008, no hotels got the certificate because it was the first year of constitution. Since 2009, the total numbers of hotels have being increased (See Figure 1)

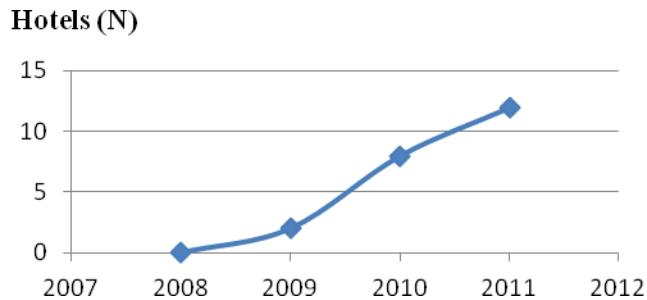


Figure 1. Range the Trends in Green Star Hotels

In 2009 there are 2 hotels applied for green star and in 2010; it increased and 10 hotels applied. In 2011, 12 hotels applied for green star and got the certificate. In 2012, one hotel have got the environmentally friendly certificate but it was not included on the graph. Because of data's for 2012 are limit to April so if we put on the graph, people can understand that in 2012 trend is going down which is not correct.

6.3. Energy Management Activities in Green Star Hotels

Within the scope of 11 green star hotels, all of them are using energy-saving lighting system in their lobbies, rooms, opened areas, offices, kitchens and laundry areas. %45 of them benefit from the sunlight in restaurants and lobbies and they have an opportunity to reduce the lighting expenditures at comparatively crowded these areas. %73 of the hotels are using motion sensor lamps in general toilets. %91 of the hotels have posters about energy savings in rooms and all of them have automatic heating and cooling systems, energy saving refrigerators and other electronically devices and machines in rooms, kitchens and laundry areas. Most of them have

double-glass windows system in whole hotel and this allow hotel management to control heat abduction. All of them are using integrated office equipments such as printer, scanner, copy and fax, all in one, devices so they do not consume energy separately.

6.4. Water Management Activities in Green Star Hotels

All hotels are using water-saving device named as aerator at their taps and showers. Aerator does not allow to much consuming and certain rate of water is being used. Also in all hotels, west-bins are being used also they have small posters for visitors about put the garbage to the west-bin. %9 of hotels are using waterless urinals and the rest of them have photocell urinals in general toilets. Photocell taps are being used in all hotels in general toilets but in rooms, none of them has. Reusable things have highly importance in green star applications. At %45 of examined hotels, there are some small cards on the towels and “will be used again” written on them. So they do not use disposable towels in rooms and after using by the visitor, they are cleaned with high-tech washing technologies and used again for another visitors. If visitors request to change their towels and bed sheets, they should put them on the floor and there is a card explains what visitors should do. Unless they do, nobody can change them and still have to use. This is an important activity in green star hotels to avoid unnecessary water utilization. %64 of the hotels have photocell tap systems also in kitchens. Because kitchens are really important consuming points about water utilization so they could control water using rate easily with this system. In some countries, especially always rainy countries in Europe, hotels are collecting rain waters by special system and using this water for garden. %18 of green star hotels in Antalya is using this system and they are using the collected rain water especially for gardens. The rate is so low because it is normal that Antalya does not get rain so much if you compare with Europe.

6.5. Increasing the Air Quality in Hotels

About examined green star hotels in Antalya, the entrance of the hotels are designed specially to leave dusts and other things outside. In some hotels, armchairs, beds and carpets are being cleaned by expert cleaning companies periodically to clean mites and allergens. %64 of the hotels are using environmentally-friendly paints and wallpapers in their rooms and lobbies. Especially about the paints, water-based paints are highly important to protect the environment. Another important subject is to determine smoking areas and rooms certainly. Also in most of the hotels, smoking is not allowed to personnel within the work hours. All of the hotels examined have special applications about smoking such as only at private areas in disco or balconies. In %73 of hotels, “High Efficiency Particulate Absolute System” (HEPA System) is implemented so they can control the air circulation efficiently. Personnel are trained about controlled use of printers in offices. Because the micro particles are unhealthy for human life so it should not be breathed so printers have to be used carefully.

6.6.Waste Management and Recycling

About waste management and recycling subject, in all hotels recycling-bins place in opened areas and visitors can reach them easily. Also it has different colors such as for glasses; blue, for paper; yellow and for plastic; green colors are used in one recycle-bin so people can understand easily which is more appropriate for their garbage. But %37 of all hotels have recycle-bin also in rooms and %55 of them have at offices. Reducing paper usage is one of the most important subject in waste management. %73 of all hotels let visitor to do their check-in and check-out transactions via on-line so they are managing the low rate paper using successfully at the same times. Also identity cards and passports of visitors are being scanned and they don't have any paper copy to keep at registration. Soaps and foams are being kept in boxes on the wall in general toilets. When they are finished, they can be filled again and boxes reused easily. But in rooms, all hotels are using disposable small bottles for shampoo and soaps. When they are finished, in some of the hotels, they are filled again and reused but most of the hotels, they are not used again. In all hotels, cotton or bamboo curtains, bed sheets and towels are being used also there are small posters on the wall in rooms and lobbies to inform visitors about waste management and reducing the wastes. Also in all hotels, using environmentally-friendly cleaners, big size detergents and other cleaners, using the reusable table clothes, to request authorized companies by municipality to take waste oil for producing bio-diesel are the most important subjects in waste management and all of them are expending energy on these subjects. Housekeeping personnel in all green star hotels is collecting the garbage from the rooms and other areas, regarding the type of items. They have some special equipment to collect the wastes and also have different colors bags regarding to type of garbage. The most important point at waste management is %73 of hotels grant old but working machines, reusable towels and bed-sheets, personnel clothes and uniforms to the charity, municipalities, hospitals, mosques and other places. Also some hotels have their own zoo's and cat houses within the hotel area and the appropriate waste foods are given to the animals. Hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials are being collected and stored in special depots outside the hotel building to avoid damaging people's health.

6.7.Environmental Training Programs for Hotel Personnel

All 11 green star hotels in Antalya have opportunity for their own personnel to train them about environment with in-house training modules. Especially personnel are being trained about appropriate techniques for waste management, fire and job security management, environment-conscious trainings, collecting and storing waste oils for bio-diesel, information security, perceiving customer expectations effectively, ISO 14001 Environment Management System, good and successful environmental activities etc.

6.8.Environmental Committee and Certificates

All hotels have their own environmental committee within the hotels. Regarding the rules determined by the Ministry, to get environmentally-friendly certificate also hotels should recruit at least one environmental engineer who is responsible for whole green star applications process within the hotel. %82 of hotels have environmental committee with 1-5 people. %9 of hotels have 6-10 people and the rest of; %9 have 11-15 people. Environmental committee is always organizing meeting with the others about activities and green star applications in their hotels and report them annually. These annual reports are taken into account by the Ministry every 2 years for certificate renewal. %91 of hotels have ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System Certificate, %73 of them have ISO 9001 Quality Management System Cert, again %73 of them have ISO 10002 Customer Satisfaction Management Certificate, %64 of hotels have ISO 14001 Environment Management System Certificate, , %36 of them have OHSAS ISO 18001 Occupational Health And Safety Management System Certificate.

6.9.Environment Policy and Visuals Attracting Visitors

The 11 hotels interviewed in Antalya have their own “Environment Policy” and %73 of them put the policy in lobby and other areas to attract visitors. Also %64 of the hotels inform the visitors about green star applications they organized and operated with using environment board, environment tree or photos in lobbies, opened areas or in rooms. %73 of hotels are getting comments and suggestions from visitors about green star applications and hotel environment. On the other hand, %64 of hotels request visitors to join them for environmental activities such as replanting, collecting garbage etc. Also some hotels instruct special areas to cultivate organic vegetables, fruits and to protect endemic plants with visitors.

7.THE AWARENESS OF VISITORS ABOUT GREEN STAR APPLICATIONS

We prepared another questionnaire for visitors not for hotel management to measure the awareness of visitors about green star applications and environmental activities operated by hotels. Firstly the visitors were classified as gender, nationality, age, education and occupation (See Table 3).

Table 3. Demographic Features of Visitors

Gender	n	%	Nationality	n	%
Male	37	69	Turkish Rep.	17	32
Female	17	31	UK	16	30
Total	54	100	Germany	11	20

Occupation	n	%			
			North Europe	4	7
Independent	22	41	Middle Europe	4	7
Not Written	8	15	Russia	2	4
Retired	6	11	Total	54	100
Teacher	3	6	Age	n	%
Accountant	3	6	18-25	2	4
Manager	3	6	26-33	5	9
Student	2	4	34-41	11	20
Sales	2	4	42-49	12	22
IT	2	4	50-57	9	17
Bank Empl.	1	2	58 and over	15	28
PC Progr.	1	2	Total	54	100
Secretary	1	2	Education	n	%
Total	54	100	Prim.School	9	17
			High School	16	30
			Graduated	25	46
			Post-Graduated	4	7
			Total	54	100

Totally 54 visitors answered this questionnaire within 4 green star hotels in Antalya. %59 of all visitors do not have any idea about green star hotels. Related to this, %76 of them did not select the hotel which they are lodging because it has green star. About green star applications in hotels, %69 of them told that green star applications are enough and %67 of them think that visual about green star application are enough within the hotels. %24 of them indicated that Blue Flag is the most important criteria while selecting the hotel. %19 of them equally said green star and other things are important. %74 of the visitors in four green star hotels think that the posters about energy saving, waste management and recycling in lobbies, rooms and open areas are enough and they attract them about protecting the environment. The same rate, %74, of visitors also think that the institutional environmental policy is so clear and they can see easily in lobbies, rooms and open areas. About the participating to environmentally activities by hotel management such as collecting garbage, replanting etc., %56 of visitors would like to participate to these activities.

%72 of visitors answers our question positively about getting their suggestions and recommendations about environment by hotel management. It is very high rate and %96 of them recommend the green star hotel which they are lodging to anyone but %48 of them indicated that they did not see any differences between other 5-star hotels (which are not green star) and this green star hotel they are lodging. The visitors who thought there was a difference between them, indicated that in green star hotel some applications are being operated more carefully such as there is a environment board which shows endemic plants and wild animals etc., more effective waste management, more service quality, to more respect for endemic plants and animals, to give more importance on cleaning, usage of plastic and paper glasses and to have a card in rooms about towels and bed sheets to put on the floor if visitors request to change.

8.CONCLUSION

Green star applications and processes are a bit different from eco-friendly hotel arrangements. Because eco-friendly hotels, only about some subjects important and assessed to protect the environment but not so much care about the hotel building, instruction necessities and some technical fields. Now, in the world the numbers of green hotels are enormously increasing because the fast global warming. All hotels have decided to be more careful about the environment, energy saving, water saving, waste management, recycling and personnel training about environment. Hotels are investing in technology and personnel training more than before and protecting the environment also began to be a strong criterion between hotels about competition circumstances. Green star hotel applications are really important in Turkey especially in Antalya. With these applications, besides the hotels, also people started to be more environment-conscious also individually. In Turkey, the number of green star hotels are increasing and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is working to encourage all types of hotels to get the environmentally-friendly certificate. Now, there are 23 green star hotels in Turkey and the most of them, %48, locate in Antalya because Antalya is the best known city about tourism by foreign visitors even in Turkey. Green star hotel concept will be important about the Scandinavian and developed countries' preferences for destinations. Now, blue flag is more affective on decisions for hotel selecting and in the future green star will be more affective instead of blue flag.

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