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Integration of Ministry of Culture & Tourism with Hotel Industry for Sustainable Management of Turkish Hotels

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Abstract

The study undertaken will make reference to the mission and function of the Turkish Ministry of Culture & Tourism by analyzing its mission and objectives. Ministry's role within the industry is entirely on the macro level and concentrate more on preserving cultural values and heritage. While on the hospitality sector its mission is to promote prominent cultural areas and landmark locations as potential touristic spots as well as develop new sites for different touristic facilities and attractions. Mainly Resort areas and properties, Thermal properties, City, Convention and Conference facilities, Fair and exhibition hotels. The boutique hotels, restaurants, bars and entertainment facilities are provoked to promote Turkish cuisine and ethnic/local specialties country wide. Development of the facilities above are being monitored by "Classification and Criteria's of Accommodation Facilities" and "Norms and Specifications Guidelines" of Hospitality facilities which coincide with the specs of international organizations such as UNWTO, EU norms and US specs. There is a detailed specification for each class of hotel, its rooms, public areas, employee and operational facilities.

Turizm ve Kültür Bakanlığı. (2015). *Turizm Tesisleri*. Turizm tesislerinin belgelendirilmesine ve niteliklerine dair hususlar: <http://teftis.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,14518/turizm-tesislerinin-belgelendirilmesine-ve-niteliklerin-.html>

TUROB. (2015). *Classification Form*. TUROB: http://english.turob.com/UserFiles/file/CLASSIFICATION_FORM_Turkey_hotels_and_restaurants_-_2015.pdf

UNWTO. (2015). *Hotel Classification Systems*. World Tourism Organization: http://dtxqt4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/hotel_classification_systems_recurrence_of_criteria_in_4_and_5_star_hotels_0.pdf

The Ministry controls each project from the beginning to the opening with its technical staff and inspectors, who visit and approve projects at different stages. Ministry has branches in main cities and touristic regions of the country. The study will suggest ways for the micro involvement of the Ministry which can pave a path for successful and sustainable management of Turkish hotels.

Keywords: Integration, Operations, Sales & Marketing, Online Marketing, Guest Service Standards, Revenue Management, Channel Management, Accounting – Front Office & Operational Software systems, Guest Satisfaction & Tracking systems, Guest Loyalty Programs

Introduction

During the past 25 years travel & tourism industry has grown and became a major contributor to national economies of many countries. Not only it has created vast amount of jobs specifically in developing countries it has triggered the development of travel & tourism related sectors as well. During this decade; the opening of new airports, construction of new highways and improved infrastructure, cities around the world have become more accessible to many people. Local governments developing new facilities and venues such as marinas, F1 Racing circuits, golf clubs, stadiums, concert & event points as well as mega shopping malls have increased the quality of life in major cities of the world. All this has increased people's desire to visit other cultures, locations further away from homeland. While on the other hand globalization has created a fierce competition in the tourism industry between destinations and countries which has made hotels and all other products within the service industry very price sensitive.

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Ministries 2015-2019 “Strategic Planning” was reviewed and a cross check was made between the subjects in the “key words” section with related suggestions.

Hypothesis: To enlarge the scope of the ministry by extending its mission in specific areas mentioned in the Key Words section. Thus become a developer of operational policy, procedures, tools and software systems to the travel & tourism industry to compete with global markets achieving successful and sustainable operation of properties and entities country wide.

The Ultimate Objective “Guest Satisfaction”: To achieve sustainable and profitable results from the number one economic contributor of GDP; the positioning of products starting with the country and its regions should have a collective plan to be implemented country-wide. Tourism is represented by the service industry and this not only limited to accommodation facilities, restaurants and places of interest. It involves, airlines, transportation (local and national; taxi cabs, city buses, metro and under-ground trains, ferries & boats, national coaches etc.) Infrastructure, Governments, municipalities, private enterprises, schools, people from all ages and walks of life, in general everything and everyone within the country. The state of affairs require a collective understanding and goals to achieve guest satisfaction and eventually place the country and its products number one destination in the world.

Review of Related Literature

Mission of the Ministry

The ministry was established to preserve, develop, initiate, and launch cultural values and heritage of the country. Protect and prevent countries historical areas and places of interest. Restore, renovate and up-keep existing historical sites and landmarks. Execute world-wide marketing, promotion and publicity of cultural values and assets of the country. Liaise and coordinate all cultural and touristic issues between local government, community and social organizations.

Objectives

- a) Preserve, develop, initiate, and launch Turkish and minority cultures, values and heritage. Increase the economical contribution of the industry to the general economy.
- b) Coordinate affairs between local government, community and social organizations.
- c) Guide and support tourism industry to become one of the main contributors of the national economy.
- d) Guide and liaise the investment and projects related to cultural and tourism activities in the country.
- e) Guide the planning and development of touristic and cultural estates and assets. Review designs and architectural and plans and authorize building of relevant projects.
- f) Engage in world-wide marketing, promotion and publicity of cultural values and assets of the country.
- g) Implement laws and legislation related to the industry. <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/TR,96130/kurulus-amaci-ve-gorevleri.html>

Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or

automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries. This growth goes hand-in-hand. This global spread of tourism in industrialised and developed states has produced economic & employment benefits in many related sectors- from construction to agriculture or telecommunications. UNWTO revealed that in 2015, international tourism generated US\$ 1.5 trillion in export earnings and by 2030, UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to reach 1.8 billion.

<http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism>

<https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2017/world2017.pdf>

The Turkish Ministry of Culture & Tourism is the legal entity which represents the government and its actions on a macro scale both in the areas of Culture, Arts, Travel & Tourism Industry. Although the ministry has been active since 1963 as “Ministry of Tourism”, in 2003 it has been integrated with Culture & Arts division housed separately under the government.

Culture & Arts division encompass the following areas:

Landmarks
Folk Knowledge
Festivals, Ceremonies, Celebrations
Beliefs
Theatrical Presentations
Games-Sports
Folk Dances
Folk Cultures
Turkish Music Culture and Examples
Costume, Traditional Arts and Crafts, Folk Paintings
Paintings
Architecture, Heating, Illumination
Culinary Culture
The Turkish World
Romany Folk Culture
Anthology of Children and Youth Stories of the Period of Republic <http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,98538/culture.html>

Tourism Division on the other hand deals with the following areas:

Activities
Destinations
Regions
Preserved Areas
Visions of Turkey
Promotional Films of Turkey
Travel Guide
Culture Routes
How to Come
Tourism Statistics
Colors from Turkey
Tour Operators
<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,99216/tourism.html>

Turkey is divided into seven regions and the Ministry has branches in these regions as well as in all major cities of the country. The Turkish government continues to issue 5 & 10 year development plans for the travel & tourism industry; announcing incentives, pay backs, tax breaks and low

interest rate options for developers and investors who are willing to open hospitality facilities in any of the seven regions. There lies a huge potential with this structuring as it has direct ties to the properties and developments existing in each region. The flexible structure of the Ministry can provide an advantage in the management and organization of each region dealing with specific problems of the region while introducing custom tailored remedies for each and every one.

Having this structure already in place the Ministry can easily fine-tune the system and contribute to the effective management of properties in every region. The areas of integration can be introduced in Operations, Sales & Marketing, Online Marketing, Guest Service Standards, Revenue Management, Channel Management, Accounting – Front Office & Operational Software systems, Guest Satisfaction & Tracking systems, Guest Loyalty Programs. Allowing to deal with these issues on national basis will not only bring cost effectiveness but will deliver much better results in Sales & Marketing of the country as a whole. On the other hand regional activities can be highlighted with destination and product differentiation. Since products and dynamics of each region varies from one another it will not only create sub national destinations and add diversity but will increase the value of each region and the country as a whole.

Outline of general strategies of the Ministry– 2015/2019

1. Sustainability of cultural heritages by contributing to the Global culture.
 - 1.1 Investigation and research cultural heritage to benefit the society and future generations.
 - 1.2 Provide and facilitate existing museums with global standards.
2. Collection, classification and preservation of national cultural values and intellectual back ground and enhance data storage-availability to general public.
 - 2.1. Proper guidance and practice of arts and science for the national social development.
 - 2.2. Increase the level of literacy with proper utilization of awareness of Libraries.
3. Promote and develop the country as an important cultural and arts center
 - 3.1. Promote and support wide spread of arts and cultural values.
 - 3.2. Promote and publicize Turkish literature globally.
4. Establish and enforce a national copyright and royalty act in conjunction with international laws and contribution positively to the national economy.
 - 4.1. Enforce a national copyright and royalty act for the benefit of all parties.
 - 4.2. Protect the application of national copyright and royalty act country wide.
5. Promote Turkish movie industry and export Turkish cultural values world-wide.
 - 5.1. Promote the shooting of national movies by incentives and social funds and increase audiences with intensive marketing and publicity.
 - 5.2. Celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Turkish

Film industry. Initiate a national inventory system to effectively compete with the global film industry.

6. Promote Turkish travel and tourism industry internationally to compete effectively with other destinations and countries.
 - 6.1. Promote alternative tourism types, specifically the Health tourism and stimulate the industry to function 12 months. Raise the quality of the service industry.
 - 6.2. Promote Turkey as a major tourism destinations world-wide with effective marketing and publicity.
7. Empower cross cultural activities and awareness of rich touristic destination and contribute to world peace.
 - 7.1. Increase international relations on culture and tourism.
 - 7.2. Initiate the implementation of international and EU policies on tourism and cultural values.
8. Install and implement efficient systems to increase capacity.
 - 8.1. Review existing management systems and upgrade with new versions.
 - 8.2. Increase service and operation quality of the Ministry.
 - 8.3. Enhance the statistical data and reporting of the industry.
http://www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPStratejikPlan/files/Xg5PU+KTB-STRATEJIK_PLAN_2015-2019.pdf

Organizational Structure

Table 1: Organization structure of the Ministry

Main Service division including departments below:

Fine Arts, Cultural heritage & Museums, Library and literature, Copyright & royalties, Cinema/Movies, Investments, Feasibilities, Publicity, National Library, Foreign Affairs & EU

Information & Auditing Division:

Head of Auditing, Strategic & development, Law Consultancy, Ministry Consultants, PR & Media.

Auxiliary Services Division:

Human Resources, Finance & Accounting, Private Secretarial section

Foreign Countries & Regional-Areas division:

Cultural & Tourism Offices in Main cities, Units attached to central office.

Foreign Offices division:

Cultural & Publicity Attachés, Cultural & Publicity Consultancy offices

Other Units division:

National Theatres, National Bale & Opera houses, National Literature div.

Floating assets & Funds Division:

Central Office, Management Office's, War History (Battles of Dardanelles)
 Ibid SPStratejikPlan.pdf

Table 2: Regional Units

Units	Number
Cultural & Tourism regional offices	81
Department of Museums & Culture division	171
Library and Literature division	1129
Fine Arts division	82
Investments & management division	74
Copy wrights & royalties division	1
PR / Publicity division Tourism info. booths	53
Total	1591

Ibid SPStratejikPlan.pdf

Table 3: Cultural Attaché & Consulting Offices

Total of 44 offices located in prominent cities world-wide

Ibid SPStratejikPlan.pdf

Organizational Analysis

Human Resources Department

2013 figures indicate a total of 14787 staff employed by the ministry (Graphic 1).

The breakdown is as follows:

% 71, (10386) as civil servants

% 9, (1385) as artists

% 18, (2702) as laborers

% 2, (314) as temporary staff/contracted employees (Graphic 2)

Staffing Details

The breakdown of 14787 is as follows:

% 63, (6536) Management personnel

% 24, (2516) Technical personnel

% 13, (1307) Auxiliary Services

(14) Medical & Health department

(13) Attorney & Lawyers (Graphic 3)

Educational background of personnel

% 0.6 (91) PhD degree

% 5 (887) Master's degree

% 40 (5897) BA/BS degree

% 13 (1864) AA degree

% 28 (4161) High School degree

% 13 (1887) Primary School degree (Graphic 5)

Language Level

Language competency of total employees is %2.17 representing 317 employees in total.

Employee breakdown by age

Age groups between:

19-29, (1427 employees representing %10)

30-39, (4271 employees representing %29)

40-49, (6168 employees representing %41)

50 and over (2921 employees representing %20) Graphic 7

Ibid SPStratejikPlan.pdf

Operational Standards & Guest Satisfaction

Today's customers demand an authentic, unscripted customer service style;

"To help launch their Ritz-Carlton luxury hotel brand [the founding leadership] decided on a set of ideal phrases for use in conversation with customers, then trained employees to use those phrases. The frequent use of certain phrases helped unify their employees around a shared identity and contributed to a distinctive 'Ritz style' that the public could

easily recognize: phrases like 'my pleasure,' 'right away,' 'certainly,' and—a personal favorite—'we're fully committed tonight.' (Translation: 'We're booked solid, bub!') The list of words and phrases to be avoided included 'folks,' 'hey,' 'you guys' and 'OK.'" <https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2015/09/24/your-customer-service-style-is-your-brand-the-ritz-carlton-case-study>

Maintaining the level of service that is required.

1. Through understanding guests' expectations,
2. Setting service standards to meet these expectations,
3. Training the staff to follow these service standards,
4. Guiding the guests' experiences,
5. Identifying and closing service gaps.

What is the value of establishing standards?

1. To determine the level of performance required
2. And how that performance should feel to the guest.
3. Guests are seeking consistency and quality at the right price
<http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/desd/tourism/docs/projects/OAS%20presentation%20The%20importance%20of%20Standards%20and%20Branding%20for%20Small%20Hotels%20-%20Shirlene%20Nibbs.pdf>

Sales & Marketing

2.1 Marketing

2.2 Sales

2.3 Sales and marketing structures and strategies

3. Distribution channels

3.1 Use of distribution channels

3.2 Direct channels

3.3 Indirect channels

3.4 Distribution systems and strategies

4. Social media marketing

4.2 Main social media channels

4.3 Industry thinking on social media

4.4 Social media and marketing

4.5 Trends and issues in social media

5. Guest review sites

5.3 Trends and issues

5.4 Links to marketing

6. Revenue management

7. Brand management

8. Loyalty programs

9. Trends and issues

<https://images.template.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/07224404/hotel-sales-and-marketing-plan.pdf>

Suggestions

Operational Guidelines: As in hotels to achieve absolute guest satisfaction many global hotel chains create branded service standards, company values, rituals for caring of guest needs. Policy-procedures and SOP's for each and every task an employee to follow. System applied individually by hotels and restaurants should be collectivized to cover the concerned parties mentioned above in all sectors and areas related to the Travel & Tourism industry. Thus resulting in overall satisfaction of guests and visitors country wide.

Software & Programs: One of the most expensive investments of hotels are software programs used in

operations. Mainly they involve sales and front office operations, accounting and finance applications with inventory and cost related apps. As well as Human resources and maintenance programs to run the operations smoothly on a daily basis. All data must be recorded and kept for budgets and forecasts as well as reviewing of performance of each department. Reservation systems can be given as an example for the front office department. A hotel with minimum 100 rooms will need to invest anywhere from 75,000-100,000 USD and up on a Property Management System software program. Although there are various programs, the most popular used by chain hotels is the Oracle's Opera Program. The program works on an add-on system with modules covering, Reservations, Sales & Marketing tools such as Revenue Management, Channel Management, Guest Satisfaction & Tracking systems, Guest Loyalty programs (Rooms department as well as Housekeeping to control availability of room stock real-time basis), Sales & Catering (F&B department), Cost Control-MC (inventories, menu engineering, pricing strategies etc.), Budget & Forecast programs (Accounting department), Micros-Fidelio system for tracking sales and consumption from each independent outlet. Employee's performance tracking system, attendance, wages & benefit computation programs (Human Resources department). Maintenance Room & Hotel Repair software to fix all broken and out of use items in guestrooms and hotel facilities. (Usually housekeeping staff reports the problems). HK also initiates a "Guest Request Report" which is sent to all related departments to respond and take corrective action. The corrective action process and the performance of departments are usually measured against time. (A standard application is 15-20 minutes after the issuing of the electronic form on Opera).

Central Reservation System: On a property level the reservations of a hotel is coordinated from the web-site of the property. If the hotel is part of a group such as a chain hotel (franchisee) the reservations first fall to the group's main reservation system than channeled to the property there after. If the hotel is a stand-alone property than it must become a member of an "Affiliated Hotel Company" such as Leading Hotels of the World or Proffered Hotels of the World. These entities have sales offices and have access to Business firms and local travel agents all around the world. Their mission is to become a business partner through membership with a price tag to a minimum 100 room property around 50,000-80,000 USD yearly, this figure can increase with additional other amenities from their sales portfolio. They also receive a commission from each reservation booked from their Central Reservation System. Should the stand-alone property not become a part of any group with central reservation system, there is an option to connect to a supplier which provides Reservation services to individual properties. One of them is "Travel Click" which can hook the individual property to its central system.

There are other sources of reservation and business suppliers for the hotels. Similar to the above these suppliers handle business through their central reservation systems world-wide. Individual hotels can be hooked-up to secure reservations for their properties. The business principal works the same through commissions and other fees. Some of the major suppliers are listed below.

OTA's (On-line Travel Agents)

GDS (Global Distribution Systems)

3rd Party Internet Suppliers (Booking.com, Hotels.com, Expedia.com etc.)

The role of the Ministry can be enlarged to cover these areas.

1. Guide and establish Service Standards, SOP's & Operating Policy Procedures (Become a leader for the service industry in delivering consistent and better service at all levels).
2. Initiate the development of Countries own Central Reservations System. (Major savings from becoming a member to other parties and cutting commissions costs).
3. Support and incentivize the development of a Property Management System (Major savings from purchasing different and expensive systems, and cutting commission costs).
4. Make impact on the "Sojourn" (resort) business by minimizing the effect of heavily dominated mega tour-operators who dictate price and business conditions.
5. Take action against unfair price competition by effectively using Revenue Management systems.
6. Become an authority and a powerful source dealing with providers of reservations world-wide.
7. Launch international fairs and travel trade organizations in the country.
8. Initiate a national education program in schools and universities by teaching at least 10 mostly used languages in the world. (In addition the languages of neighboring countries).
9. Utilize inspectors and personnel of ministry on a Regional level for site visits and inspections to upkeep performance standards through established guidelines.
10. Set-up offices in hotels to educate ministry personnel to gain practical experience on the job.
11. Coordinate the community on travel & tourism issues through regional meetings.
12. Handle sales and marketing, publicity PR and all related media, advertising and promotions on a regional and national level.
13. Attend all International Fairs and Trade-shows nationally representing each region individually.
14. Support the national carrier to provide direct flights to major cities of the world.
15. Engage national universities and colleges with hotel schools in this mega project.
16. Set-up a link with vocational schools and ministry with related government offices (Ministry of Labor etc.) and liaise the hiring of trained blue collar and non-management personnel.
17. Initiate part-time working statues in the service industry.
18. Engage non-governmental organizations in the project.
19. Create consensus between private sector, local government, municipalities and the private sector concerning the project.
20. Involve potential investors as well as existing ones in taking active role on the project.
21. Promote Turkish cuisine worldwide.
22. Promote Turkish wines worldwide.

Feedback on Ministries 2015-2019 Strategic Plan

1. Increase the language capacity and number of speakers (specifically the ones who work in foreign offices)
2. Raise the level of education within the ministry.
3. Set-up environmental department to raise awareness on local & global issues.
4. Establish a technological department to guide cultural, travel and tourism sectors in dealing with global change.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/e%C4%9Fitim-sisteminde-de%C4%9Fi%C5%9Fim-zaman%C4%B1-ahmet-ferda-seymen>
 - a. Increase the amount of IT specialists, Software programs, Strategists, Statistician.
<http://www.egitimdeteknoloji.com/stem-nedir-stem-egitimi-ulkemizde-neleri-degistirebilir/>
 - b. Invest on evaluation of Big Data and implement Data Mining Systems.
 - c. Create a mega international web-site and portal for the country integrating culture & tourism information, on-line bookings etc.
 - d. Transfer all activities and scope of the foreign attaches/consulting offices on to the portal.
 - e. Create a guest/customer feedback software on the portal with links to hotel & accommodation facilities with analytical information and data. Emphasize on CRM module and custom tailored guest approaches.
 - f. Invest into Industry 4.0 systems, statistical data mining, codification and industrial engineering.
5. Reduce top-heavy and bureaucratic structure of the ministry.
6. Introduce “Change Management” throughout the ministry.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/change-management-ahmet-ferda-seymen>
7. Reduce the amount of employees working over-seas.
 - a. 40-above age group constitute %61 of total employees (9,020)
<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/10-soruda-kodlama-egitimi-4007666>
8. Reduce the National-Regional staff and integrate all services in to the mega-portal
9. Initiate and increase the academic research & development of the sector.

Conclusion

Initially the Ministry should take on a more active role with its branches functional already in main cities and touristic regions of the country. Eventually with the application of “change management strategy” the works of the Ministry should be taken into a more technologically advanced level enabling more efficient and effective establishment in promoting the country and endorse sustainable management of the tourism industry. The study will be shared with the office of Travel & Tourism affairs and two major universities with hotel schools located in Istanbul and Ankara. The suggestions will further be analyzed and sharing of objectives by different parties will be initiated to the achievement of the mega project to be headed by the Ministry.

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