

number of returns has more than doubled compared to previous years, highlighting the need for brands to create positive connections with customers who are on the verge of losing brand loyalty.

According to the Pew Research Center, 64 % of shoppers prefer to shop in physical stores. Brands, recognizing that consumers are not yet ready to give up shopping in stores, are strategically adapting. Retail giants such as Kohl's, Target, and Barnes and Noble have planned to open smaller stores, confirming the appeal of physical stores.

Sustainable shopping is becoming an important trend in the retail sector, driven by growing environmental awareness and a desire to make ethical choices. A key indicator of this trend is the fact that 58 % of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products. This shift in consumer behavior reflects the desire for sustainability and ethical consumption, forcing retailers to rethink their practices to align with the values of environmentally conscious customers [1].

Reference

1. ТОП-6 трендов розничной торговли, которые повысят ее эффективность в 2025 г. // LeverX. — URL: https://leverx.com/ru/newsroom/retail-trends?hs_amp=true (дата обращения: 19.11.2024).

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POST COVID INFLUENCE ON INTERNAL TOURISM

Today, the tourism industry is still facing the challenges posed by the pandemic 2020, which emerged suddenly and, spreading rapidly around the world, severely damaged numerous economic sectors. International tourism is no exception: border closures, restrictions on the movement of people and social distancing measures have led to a sharp decline in international travel and, consequently, a significant drop in tourism revenues, disrupting the habitual way of life of people and causing the global crisis in the world economy and healthcare.

The tourism sector, which contributed \$2.9 trillion to the US GDP in 2019 and supported 300 million jobs, is facing a sharp reduction in international arrivals (by 73 % in 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has imposed severe restrictions on all kinds of travelling, resulting in historically low levels of tourist flows. The most tourism-dependent countries (Jamaica, Maldives and Cyprus), with a 50 % share of tourism in GDP, suffered significant economic losses.

The air transportation industry is one of the hardest impacted sectors due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Most countries in the world have

imposed restrictions on domestic travel as well as a ban on travel abroad, resulting in massive cancellations of international flights. Data from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) indicated a 38 % decline in total global capacity in March 2021. Total international passenger numbers have fallen from 44 % to 80 % because of the COVID-19 infection [1], which has also led to massive layoffs, job losses in the hotel and restaurant industry. Well-known hotel chains all over the world faced steady cancellations of bookings, resulting in a loss of \$ 150 billion and a significant decrease in occupancy of employees. In Asia and Europe, hotel industry revenues fell by 67.8 % and 61.7 % respectively.

The challenging economic environment is also putting additional pressure on an effective international tourism recovery, given rising oil prices, rising inflation, potential interest rate hikes, high levels of debt and ongoing supply chain disruptions.

Inland tourism has become a key driver of economic recovery, especially in the countries with large domestic markets (China and Russia). Travellers began to show interest in less crowded destinations and outdoor recreation, which changed tourism preferences. Despite the slow recovery of international tourism, new tendencies, such as agro-ecotourism, began to emerge in 2021.

One of the most important factors, which has become a key element in the recovery process, is to increase the resilience of the tourism industry to future crises. This presupposes developing flexible business models that can adapt to rapidly changing conditions, as well as introducing innovative technologies such as online booking and virtual tours that can improve customer experience and travel safety. The influence of COVID-19 on the tourism industry has therefore catalyzed the necessary changes and transformations that can lead to a more sustainable future for tourism.

A sustainable approach to tourism has become more and more relevant, which may influence future strategies and practices in the industry. Such initiatives as promoting local businesses, developing ecotourism and adopting new technologies can provide new opportunities for the industry to grow and adjust to any new circumstances. However, a full recovery of the tourism sector will require time, on the one hand, and strengthening the linkages between tourism and other parts of the economy, on the other hand. Such tendency will help not only to rebuild the sphere itself, but also to redefine the tourism industry in order to respond effectively to the potential challenges in the world economy.

Reference

1. COVID-19 related travel restrictions: A global review for tourism // UNWTO. — URL: https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-04/TravelRestrictions_0.pdf (date of access: 19.11.2024).