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THE CAPACITY OF THE HOTEL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ORGANIZING MICE-EVENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

All year round business tourism, due to its predictability, and high-income clients, is one of the most promising types of tourism. Today, a new niche in this kind of tourism — MICE-industry is being formed. This abbreviation is made up of key areas: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences/Conventions, and Exhibitions/Events. It has been noted that Belarus has undiscovered potential for organising MICE-events. Thus, the object of this research is MICE-events in Minsk hotels. The subject of the research is hotels facilities in terms of organizing MICE-events. The main aim of the research is to assess the infrastructure of Minsk hotels; to suggest ways for increasing their potential for organising MICE-events. To reach the aim of the research, the following tasks are set: to study statistical data relevant to the research, to identify the advantages and disadvantages of hotel infrastructure in terms of organizing MICE-events in Minsk (Belarus).

According to the data of the Belarusian tour operator "Automated technologies of tourism, in Minsk, there are 58 hotels. Of these, only 18 % are 4 and 5 star hotels. These include the Europe Hotel, Crowne Plaza Minsk, Beijing Hotel, Double Tree by Hilton Minsk Hotel etc. The service in hotels of such level is extremely popular for organising business events, as it supports the image of a client- organization. The analysis of these hotels infrastructure has shown that they comply with the requirements for holding MICE-events, simultaneously providing accommodation services, organization business meetings, banquet services, and recreation and relaxation.

However, it is necessary to highlight some features of their organization. For example, among the 49 halls for business events offered by these hotels, 57.45 % are conference rooms accommodating from 30 to 230 people; 29.79 % — meeting rooms with a capacity from 6 to 25 people; 12.77 % — congress halls with a maximum capacity of 598 and 550 people. So, it can be concluded that the potential of the hotel infrastructure is more directed to the organization of conferences but not congresses for 300 people and above. The advantages are that all meeting rooms are equipped with modern facilities and located in close proximity to cultural, sport, historical, and administrative centre of Minsk.

However, there are some disadvantages. It is known that many business guests travel with children, therefore, the hotel infrastructure should include facilities that provide child care services (games room, nannies and tutor assistance, children's animation team). In addition, the catering and business centre functions are organised by different structural units of the hotel: food service and the reception respectively. A client, who wants to book a conference room and organize the reception, needs to contact both an event-manager and a catering specialist. Such an organization is inconvenient both for the client and the executor (a hotel). Finally, 3 star hotels as well as the ones with lower or no classification also provide facilities for business events; however, they do not form a package of services that would be optimal for the organization of MICE-events.

It can be concluded that hotel infrastructure in Minsk is represented by a sufficient set of services and has a great potential for the organization of MICE-events. However, there are ways to increase its capacity by:

1. Attracting a greater number of clients by providing services to businessmen travelling with children.

2. Building congress halls which are able to simultaneously serve a great number of business guests.

3. Promoting the services of 3 star hotels as well as the ones with lower or no classification for organizing MICE-activities that go beyond the standard format.

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THE PROBLEMS OF SEPARATE ELEMENTS OF THE CONSUMER MARKET

Nowadays, the existing problems of the consumer market not only interfere with its development, but also prevent implementation of economic potential of trade. These problems should be solved systemically as the elements of consumer market (demand, supply, price and needs) are closely interconnected [1, p. 47]. Let us consider the problems of separate elements of the consumer market.

Real cash incomes of the population are in decrease since 2015: in 2015 cash incomes of the population constituted 94,2 % to the previous year [2]. Tendencies to positive changes of the situation are not observed. Purchasing funds are decreasing respectively, and purchasing power of the population falls, that is equivalent to the decrease in aggregate demand. Demand is a solvent need. For the satisfaction of their needs, the population involves savings, thus, on the one hand, the amount of potential investments decreases, on the other hand, the amount of savings is exhausted, that, at their expiration, results in the dissatisfaction of the population needs.