

USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN SMALL HOTELS

Many definitions try to capture the essence of public relations trying to list main activities which make up practice. Concept development and attempt to describe practice mostly lead to the definition of public relations as a function of guidance which creates and maintains useful relationships between the organization and different public to which its success or failure is depended on.⁷ It is important to notice that the concept of public relations is quite often mixed with component parts and activities of public relations themselves, such as: publicity, advertising, lobbying etc. Separate field of PR, Relations with media gets more and more attention. Besides they create public opinion, media transfer information to potential guests. Therefore, development and maintenance of quality relations with the media becomes one of the most important segments of organization's strategic planning. Free presence in the media emerges, total expenses decrease and a good promotion for the company is created. Kotler⁸ defines publicity as non paid message about the business of the company or their products (services) delivered through one of the mass media. Small entrepreneurs in hospitality should accept media as a good opportunity to promote themselves with no cost. But first, a company should have an interesting and attractive message which would ensure the attention of both media and the target groups whom the message should reach. Small business subjects will easily gain their trust with their cordial behavior, hospitality and the ability to adapt quickly. In the continuation, the results of empirical research of PR use within small entrepreneurship in hospitality are presented. They show that there is no real conscience of the importance of Public relations as a part of communication strategy

It is visible that only 20 % of small entrepreneurs use PR, 60% of them use it regularly, while others use it quite weak and irregularly. It is possible to conclude that only 12% of all sample small entrepreneurs use PR significantly and affirmatively. Therefore, more important implementation of PR in small hotels is yet to come. In general, there is no quality approach or tactics selection without previously defined market position or small entrepreneurship in Croatian hospitality. Defining market position can be labeled with a slogan: „Small hotels for a quality vacation“. The need of market activity improvement on all levels emerged, because there is no clear policy of promotion, attracting and creation of guests' loyalty. Activities of promotion are based on „own forces“ to which the attraction of guests depends. Formation of branding, sale system, promotion and policy should be the basis of new marketing approach. PUBLIC RELATIONS Used 20% Not used 80% Weak Significant Local level Opening an object No need Affirmative Cheapest advertinsing Best way to inform the public Too expensive Unjustified No need (good position)2

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I. Milohnić: IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT IN SMALL HOTELS 236 New tactics of communication would be based on:9 – Special signs for categorizing different accommodation offer – Study travels with the task of learning from the leading destinations about the successful development and products structuring procedure – Association of free access, at the level of small hospitality entrepreneurs, all operators included in the sector of vacation at seaside/in the continental part, including the representatives of private and public sector. Its aims, among others, include: development and creation of products package, strategies of promotion and commercialization and marketing projects co-financing – Off-line advertising consists of promo offers in chosen printed media of target

emitive markets. Their aim is to induce out of season demand – Press trips which generate reports and articles on theme offer of small objects accommodation – e-mailing of hotels and apartments, monthly offers sent by e-mail to potential clients who use Internet – Your eyes only, special way of cooperative direct marketing, consists of promo video sent to a small number of households. Used to launch renewed accommodation offer with 4 or 5 stars – Appetizers of hotels and apartments, leaflets which contain shortened presentation of specially marked accommodation offer – Directory – elaborate guide of small accommodation objects (location, category)