

THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt to the customers changing needs and desires as the customers' satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are the main focus of the tourism business.

The development objective of tourism industry is to contribute to the enhancement of the quality and variety of tourism products and services in targeted destinations in order to increase the number of tourist visits, foreign exchange earnings and jobs.

Tourism development mainly refers to the situation of getting quality growth in tourism sectors in terms of its development, strong plan and policies and marketing throughout the world. Moreover, the tourism development includes accessible way to reach the destination, proper facilities like hotels, means of transportation, amenities, for the tourist to have full satisfaction in the particular destination.

Quality is the most important competitive advantage of a tourism company or the key to competitiveness.

Keywords: *quality management; tourism development; tourism; tourism industry; international tourism.*

JEL Classification: Z₃₀, Z₃₂



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Introduction

Tourism quality development has generated many concerns among all those directly or indirectly involved in everything that the so-called travel industry is. Tourism is the most complex industry in the world, with the whole society involved. At the same time, tourism reflects the whole of society, can be considered a true barometer of it.

Quality can be defined as a set of properties and features of a tourist product or service that gives it the ability to meet explicit and implicit needs. To improve the quality of products and services offered on the market, a travel company must first know how customers perceive the quality and quality they expect to receive from the service provider. In achieving quality, not only compliance with standards is sufficient, but also the formation of a culture of quality in the field; the professional and ethical training of the staff to change their mentality towards the client and the work they are doing.

The tourist product is defined as a set of material goods and services capable of meeting a person's travel needs between the time of departure and the time of arrival at the place of departure.

The quality objectives are to clarify the tourism companies on: where they are, where they are heading, how they intend to reach where they want, what is the expected outcome.

The quality objectives in the tourism industry are:

- for business performance;
- for the performance of the product or service;
- for the performance of the process;
- for the organization's performance;
- for staff performance.

In the competitive economy, customers are and will be more and more demanding. In order to be able to meet more or less fluctuating expectations, it is imperative that performance be achieved in the strictest sense possible. Quality is conditioned by the clear definition of the requirements that a service or a service delivery process must fulfil in the form of observable characteristics and likely to be valued by the client. The qualities of the tourism services set the minimum level of consumer protection and, in their absence, the quality or total quality is impossible to achieve.

Literature review

My research paper entitled: *The development of quality management in the tourism industry*, is written after I've documented on the basis of the following published articles:

1. "Quality management in the tourism industry" written by Zaran Katanić, Snežana Todosijević Lazović and Radmilo Todosijević published on *Mining and Metallurgy Engineering Bor*.
2. "Employee performance and quality management in the tourism sector" written by Burhan Mahmoud Awad Alomari and AlaEldin Mohammad Hasan Awawdeh published on *Canadian Center of Science and Education*.
3. "Total quality management in the tourism industry" written by Tohid Kachwala, Ashu Sharma and Shailaja Rego published on *Smart Journal of Business Management Studies*.
4. "The role of development of transport tourism in economic growth" written by Flora Alasgarova published on *Annals of Spiru Haret University. Economic Series*.

The development of quality management in tourism

In introduction quality is vital for a successful tourism industry. The tourism has an exciting mix of different products that can be offered to the tourist, and it enjoys a stable market share. Nonetheless, a rapid growth in alternative destinations worldwide means that tourism industry today faces the need to be ever more quality conscious to continue to attract tourists in a global marketplace. Quality is rapidly becoming the decisive competitive instrument in tourism. [European Commission, 2018]

A quality product is crucial for a viable business, for an attractive destination and for the sustainability of the tourism industry. Ensuring the constant improvement of quality, whether it is of a tourist destination as a whole or of the individual attractions and services within it, should be a continuous process. It means setting objectives, developing a strategy, making improvements and checking results. [European Commission, 2018]

Consumers are increasingly choosing those offers in which they can be certain that the services, outdoor experiences and also the welcome from the local population are of a high quality and worth the price paid. At the same time, tourist destinations and the providers of tourist services are increasingly confronted with changes in guest expectations and requirements, and increasing competition at

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home and abroad. A lack of attention to quality issues now could have serious consequences later in terms of loss of image, falling income and the initiation of potentially expensive damage limitation exercises. [European Commission, 2018]

Table no. 1. Good reasons for a quality approach

Top 10 good reasons for a quality approach	
1.	Quality gives the edge over competitors.
2.	Quality performance makes destinations and services easier to market, both to operators and tourists.
3.	A quality product results in customer loyalty.
4.	Better quality means more profit.
5.	Quality management leads to a stable tourism industry and protects jobs.
6.	Quality improvements in a destination provide a better quality of life for local residents.
7.	Quality management improves access to finance.
8.	Effective monitoring of progress avoids repeating costly mistakes.
9.	Careful data collection provides the tool for making the right management decisions.
10.	Monitoring progress in quality improvement provides the understanding that encourages proactive management.

Source: *personal contribution*

Quality test is based on sound business practice, in effect what tourist destinations should be doing automatically to give best value. Using quality test will help tourist

destinations and the enterprises within them to maintain the quality of their offer, but it should be underlined that quality test is not a guarantee of quality in itself. The indicators provide the user with vital information on the results of implementing quality processes in the destination, but those processes still have to be implemented, which requires both destination and stakeholders to commit to a continuous process of quality management. [European Commission, 2018]

The quality test tool has been designed for evaluating the quality performance of tourist destinations and their related services. Here a tourist destination is understood to be an area which is separately identified and promoted to tourists as a place to visit, and within which the tourism product is coordinated by one or more identifiable authorities or organisations. As such, quality test has a wide range of potential users. It can, for example, be used to good effect by [European Commission, 2018]:

- local destination managers that want to use an integrated approach to measuring and monitoring quality trends in their destination, and see how they perform in comparison with similar destinations;
- other public authorities that are interested in the quality performance of the tourism industry in their destination, and need some tips on how to proceed;
- tourist services, ranging from collective accommodation to outdoor activities, that want to identify relevant points to measure for monitoring their own quality performance;
- travel organisers and intermediaries that are interested in monitoring the performance of the tourist destinations that they send their customers to, and can use the indicators as a basis for dialogue with the local destination manager.

Quality test in tourism industry has been developed so that it can be applied to any type of urban, rural or coastal destination. The tool was developed using the life cycle of a typical holiday experience. The tool therefore focuses on the service points that occur throughout this lifecycle, and incorporates them into the indicators. In principal it is relevant for any type of tourist destination and its associated tourism and transport services. [European Commission, 2018]

The tourists satisfaction level from staying at a destination depends not only on their experience of specific tourist services, but also on more intangible factors, for example hospitality, safety and security, and cleanliness. The success of a destination is therefore a function of many interdependent components. This



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underscores the need for an integrated approach to managing the quality of tourist destinations on a continuous basis. [European Commission, 2018]

The concept of the Integrated Quality Management of destinations was developed to satisfy this need. [European Commission, 2018]

Integrated Quality Management combines four key elements in its approach [European Commission, 2018]:

–Tourist satisfaction, which primarily consists of regularly monitoring the tourists' levels of satisfaction with the services in the destination.

–Local tourism industry satisfaction, a key activity of Integrated Quality Management involves evaluating the quality of the jobs and the careers of industry employees, as well as the well-being of local tourism enterprises.

–Local people's quality of life, concern for the well-being of residents means that a destination should find out what the resident population thinks of the effects of tourism.

–Environmental quality, measures of the positive or negative impact of tourism on the environment, the destination's natural, cultural and man-made assets.

Any imbalance in one of these four tourism quality aspects can have a significant effect on the overall quality of the destination and the tourism product. [European Commission, 2018]

In most destinations the final product that the tourists experience, and therefore the memories that they take home with them, is a complex fusion of their exposure to many different phenomena in the destination, for example the local tourism industry, the destination's resident population and the environment in the destination. This relationship is interlinked because not only do these aspects influence the tourist experience, but the tourists in turn influence these aspects. [European Commission, 2018]

Quality test is of benefit to tourism destinations because it provides them with [European Commission, 2018]:

–An integrated tool for measuring and monitoring the internal quality performance of the destination over time.

–A vehicle for benchmarking their quality performance externally with that of similar destinations.

Quality management is a cyclical process, and the development of the quality strategy is not the end of the process in the destination but just the beginning. Objectives set in the strategy should be implemented and the related output targets

need to be measured to evaluate the success of the actions. It is also necessary to monitor the impacts of tourism upon the destination as a whole. [European Commission, 2018]

Obviously, the quality test tool cannot predict what objectives each tourist destination should be implementing and develop indicators for measuring the success of those actions in meeting their targets. [European Commission, 2018]

Instead, using quality test, a destination is provided with a set of core indicators to measure and regularly monitor and evaluate the results of its work with quality management on the visitor, tourist services, the environment and the local community. By keeping records of its quality performance from previous years, the destination can see if there has been a positive or negative development over time for each indicator. [European Commission, 2018]

Importantly, quality test can be used to communicate quality performance to relevant stakeholders, or example via an annual report. Quality management in tourism is a complex issue, and quality test proposes a set of indicators that can be used to give an overview of quality in the destination and the work being done in quality management. [European Commission, 2018]

Furthermore, using quality test, a destination can benchmark itself with other destinations with a similar location and level of tourism. In an open benchmarking process, one organisation compares its business performance with another organisation in the same line of business. This form of comparison reveals strong points as well as weaknesses. Where a weakness has been identified, the organisation can then identify what the other organisation is doing to achieve a better business performance – so-called good practice – and then implement this good practice itself. Quality test provides a set of indicators that can be used to measure quality performance in tourist destinations. Destinations can then compare their indicator results with those of similar destinations to identify strong points and weaknesses. Similarly, where one destination identifies a weakness, it can then communicate with a better performing destination to identify what they are doing the good practice and then implement these activities itself. [European Commission, 2018]

To conclude, working with quality test will give to tourism destinations [European Commission, 2018]:

–A set of indicators that can be used to measure the effects of quality management on the overall level of tourism quality in the destination and to monitor developments over time.

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- An opportunity to see the linkages between the various aspects of quality in the destination, to the tourists' perception of quality in the destination.
- A means of communicating quality performance to other stakeholders in the destination.
- A tried and tested set of indicators that can be used for benchmarking with similar destinations.

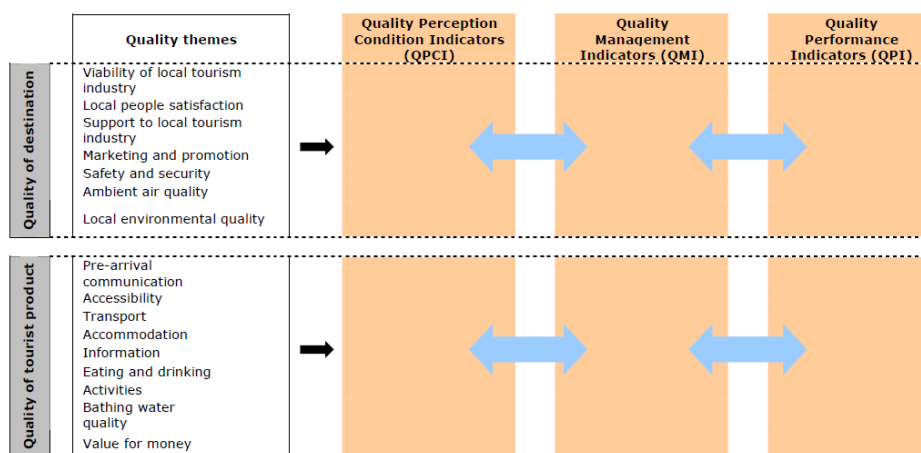


Figure no. 1. The quality test tool

Source: European Commission (2018), *A Manual for Evaluating the Quality Performance of Tourist Destinations and Services*, accessed May 2, 2018, <https://ec.europa.eu>

Quality test is a tool for the Quality Performance Evaluation of tourism destinations. The aim of this section is to describe in detail the components of the quality test tool, and how it can be used by a destination to evaluate its quality performance. [European Commission, 2018]

Social media has changed that by making reviews and feedback more public, enabling an important new measure of market performance: the Guest Satisfaction Index. The popularity of online reviews and the importance of social media are changing the way by which hotels gather customers feedback. [Response Learning Space, 2018]

The importance of quality in tourism

Quality in tourism is the result of a process that involves meeting customer needs, requirements and expectations with regard to tourism services and products at an acceptable price, in accordance with accepted contractual conditions and quality determinants: safety, security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, the authenticity and harmony of tourist activity, both in terms of the human factor and the natural environment.

Quality in tourism has the following implications:

–The consumer does not have to confront unpleasant surprises in the tourist destination and must receive exactly the services he has reserved.

–Quality can be achieved by each tourist service provider, regardless of the category, for example a modest and cheap accommodation unit can provide its clients with quality services and on the other hand not all expensive and higher rated accommodation units also imply a quality superior service.

–Tourism quality must be done in a sustainable way so that it can attract the same customers over time.

–Tourism quality has to fulfil beyond the level of tourism service providers (accommodation, meals, transport), depending on the environment, general infrastructure, climate and socio-political conditions.

From the point of view of the tourist, the tourist services are perceived as a package consisting of several individual but interdependent services: information and preliminary documentation of the tourist destination, transportation, accommodation, food and various recreational services, each leaving the mark on the degree of satisfaction of the tourist.

The performing of tourism services depends on each tourist in part, his expectations, his needs and his opinions and as well prepared staff as possible, unpleasant situations or misunderstandings may occur. Such situations have been called “critical incidents”, being perceived as defects or variations in the tourist services chain, which lead to a decrease in the satisfaction of tourists.

The quality of tourism services should not only be achieved but communicated to customers; often due to inadequate communication, information does not reach consumers, and efforts to meet quality standards are not rewarded by an upward trend in earnings. The main problems in communicating the quality of tourism services arise for the following reasons: communication is not adequate and does not



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take into account the perception of quality by each segment or the expectations of tourists are not communicated to the entire staff involved in the rendering of tourism services. Consumers' expectations do not coincide with the perception of tourism service providers, making comparisons with other destinations or other providers offering similar services.

Communicating the quality of tourism services to customers involves cooperation at different levels: from government organizations to travel agency staff because in tourism there is not only a product but a multi-factor experience that involves more providers. Tourist service providers are also very important in communicating the quality of tourist services or a tourist destination. The staff has a key role in getting in direct contact with tourists and in the absence of proper training, quality standards can only stay at the theoretical or management level without being perceived by customers. Quality communication in tourism can also be done through different symbols and classifications: brand, quality label, and certification.

By improving the quality of tourism services helps to sustainable development and for creating new jobs.

Tourism quality can be measured by the quality of the tourist experience, by the quality of life of people who travel for a certain time in a place other than the permanent residence.

In the opinion of consumers, there are three levels of qualitative appreciation of services, grouped in the order of the difficulty of assessment:

- The quality sought: the characteristics of the sought that the client has met and found and which he can evaluate before consuming them.
- Experimental quality: services characteristics that the customer can evaluate during and after consuming.
- Credible quality: the characteristics of services that the customer cannot evaluate correctly even after consumption, but to whom they show great trust.

According to this group, the clients give more importance to the experimental quality and the credible quality of the services.

In most cases, the client subjectively appreciates the quality of the benefits compared to other similar consumer experiences in the past. From this point of view, in the case of a custom service rendering, various subjective degrees of appreciation of the quality of services can be distinguished:

–Excellent services – if in the consumer’s eyes the perceived reception of the services exceeds the qualitative level of the services the client expects.

–Good quality services – if the client’s expectations are in line with the provider’s promises and/or if their expectations match the quality level of the services that the consumer has benefited from and other similar situations in the past.

–Services rated as satisfying qualitative – if in certain pressing situations the client in question prevails over one or more of the utilities offered by the services; In these situations, the client accepts as satisfactory the mediocre quality of the services, if in his / her perception the benefits fall within the permissible limits of an area of tolerance, correlated with the perceived prices.

–Inappropriate quality services – if the consumer, in the light of his past experience, appreciates that the services received are below his expectations in relation to the fee paid.

The reliability of tourism services is a vital issue for assessing the quality of services. In general terms, reliability is the consistency of services to be offered and rendered, in the logical succession of their consumption; any interruption of this logical supply chain causes efforts to substitute a tourist service with another with similar content. Even if the substitute service will have superior features compared to the service originally scheduled, it will not generate the desired satisfaction for tourists and, to a good extent, not even for providers. As a consequence, a tourist service is considered reliable insofar as it has been properly offered, when requested, according to the destination for which it was designed and offered.

The reliability of the entire tourism product will depend, ultimately, on the reliability of its component parts. Defined in terms of specialty, reliability is the probability that a service will function correctly, over a period of time and in prescribed usage conditions, and unreliability is the contrary notion of reliability – the probability that a service will not work properly so with a minus in the appreciation of consumers on the components of the tourism products.

In order to obtain a differentiated advantage, providers need to improve quality in order to overcome consumers’ expectations of quality.

Measuring service quality in tourism industry

Measuring quality is critically important for tourism industry beside with other types of businesses. The importance of measuring quality for tourism organizations

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has vividly augmented in the last years due to the high level of competition in the industry produced by the globalization and fewer obstacles for entering into the industry. [Quality Management in Hospitality, 2018]

Gap Model of Service Quality

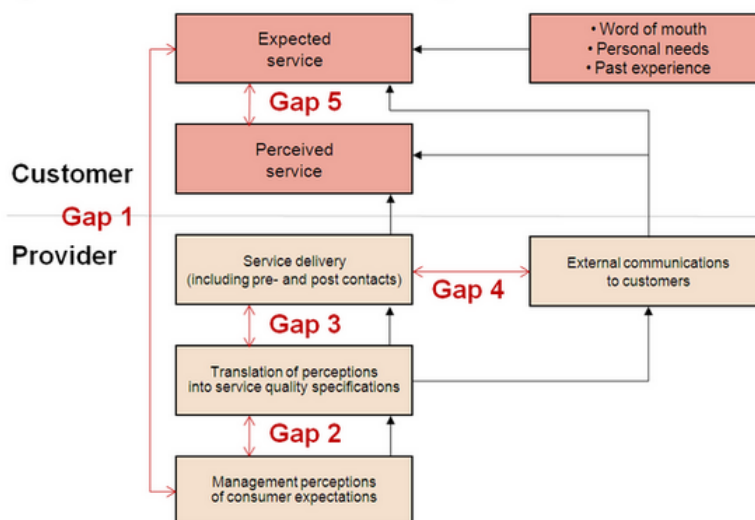


Figure no. 2. The five gap model

Source: *Quality Management in Hospitality (2018)*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://qualitymanagementinhospitality.zohosites.com/frameworks-and-methodologies.html>

An excellent quality management can also reflect a country's image because it tells the quality and value of a service in a country. Tourism industry introduces wider business and services, because this sector includes cooperative relationships with different organizations. For example, hotels are allied with car rental agencies, airlines, other hotels, restaurants, and suppliers. [Quality Management in Hospitality, 2018]

For that, every country needs to share globally the best programs and practices for training and retention, and determine tourism industry sponsor more readily available

educational programs to employees at different organizational levels to raise awareness and knowledge. [Quality Management in Hospitality, 2018]

The most important models that measure quality service in the tourism industry are the following [Quality Management in Hospitality, 2018]:

– The five gap model: quality service model is a helpful instrument to define the objectives of quality management. It essentially focuses on customer and it helps to clarify the services process.

– Perceived quality service model is a supportive tool to understand issues that affect customer perceived quality in a business service.

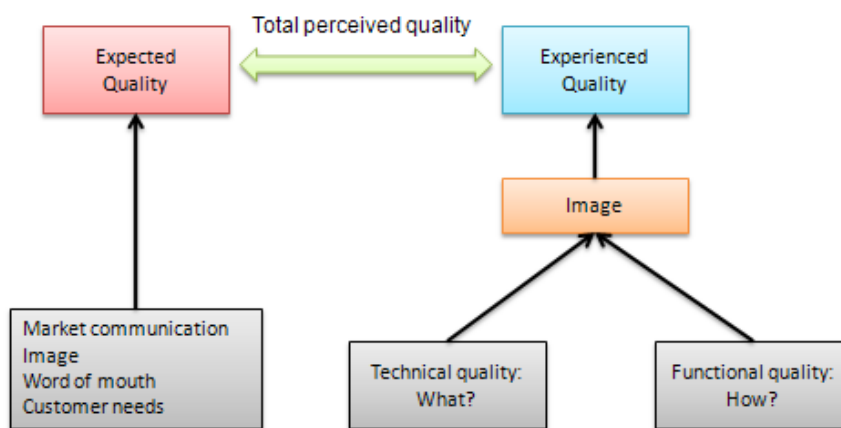


Figure no. 3. Perceived quality service model

Source: *Quality Management in Hospitality (2018)*, accessed May 3, 2018,
<http://qualitymanagementinhospitality.zohosites.com/frameworks-and-methodologies.html>

– The critical incident technique: attempts to recognize what is happening in the various moments of truth and the results are gathered from various samples after deep investigations. It's helpful in providing useful and accordingly quality improvement.

Apart from the internal and external measurement, there are some other tools to monitor quality of products or services and achieve continuous improvement in the tourism industry. Mystery guest/Mystery shopper (a technique of covertly visiting

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companies in inquiry, to check the quality of services offered), market evaluations, complaints and incidences in definite forms, audit reports, satisfaction surveys, benchmarking, and self-assessments by employees or managers through evaluation the company's situation in comparison to other competitors. [Quality Management in Hospitality, 2018]

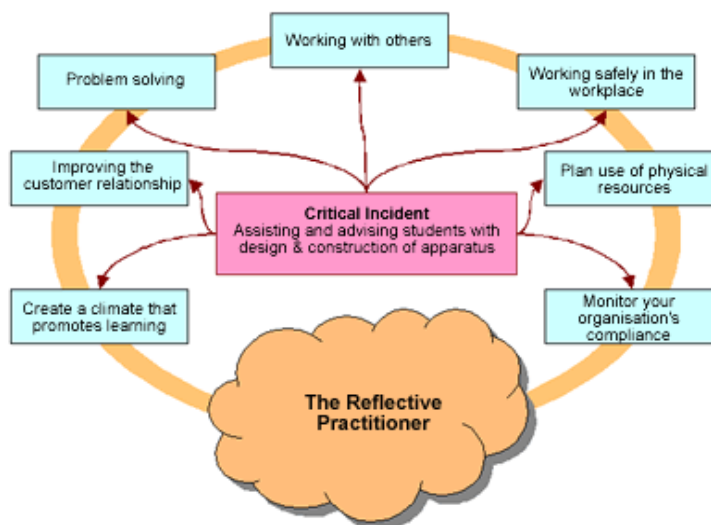


Figure no. 4. Example of critical incident technique

Source: *Quality Management in Hospitality (2018)*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://qualitymanagementinhospitality.zohosites.com/frameworks-and-methodologies.html>

Quality standards provide a framework to guide stakeholders to improve their operations and services along the whole tourism value chain so as to create a complete and positive tourism experience. [Hospitality Net, 2018]

Conclusions

In conclusion, considering the definitions of the quality and management in the tourism and travel industry, it can be said that there is no services or tourist products without quality.



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The quality of a product or service is judged by the customer's perception of the outcome and often even more than the result itself.

The quality of services is related to all stages of the service, starting with the initial order, until the sale and the next period. Taking into account the intangibility of services, these characteristics can be called "permanent qualitative performance" and they are increasingly a central element for service management and therefore a key factor in managerial strategy.

Service quality can also be defined as compliance with customer requirements or customer benefits, or the qualitative advantage of the process over the quality of the elements used.

Quality management can have multiple meanings: practical work, decision maker, and science.

Tourism industry staff must be motivated to provide yield and at the same time, they must be trained on a regular basis, they must have a good understanding of codes of conduct and codes of professional ethics. They must provide quality services to the customer or potential client.

A satisfied customer recommends tourism service provider at two or three person, but an unsatisfied customer makes a bad advertisement at ten people.

As a result, the tourism industry has to cope competition and to bring quality products to the market.

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