

Implementation of the Environmental Management Concept in the Hospitality Industry

Manuela-Dora Orboi¹, Adrian Băneș², Sorin Stanciu¹, Tiberiu Iancu¹

¹Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine „King Michael the 1st”,
300645-Timisoara, Calea Aradului, No. 119, Romania

²Romanian Academy – Timișoara Branch, 300223-Timisoara, Bd. Mihai Viteazu, No. 24, Romania

Abstract

Globally, the concern for the environment is continually growing, among travel and tourism industry operators. Each unit hotel has its identity, its characteristics, and therefore, it is necessary to use and apply specific information about the environment, so as to create their own proactive environment protection policies. It must be performed an overview of environmental issues affecting the company and the performance that it has. Each unit hotel policy must be based on actual consumer demand for tourist services - as an active and conscious part - along with unit staff. Environmental action planning of a hotel unit has to go through several stages. The preparation of environmental actions of a hotel unit, involves biological control, which should help in making decisions on the most important measures that would benefit. Implementing the concept of environmental management in the hospitality unit requires including and taking the following steps: motivation, actions planning, analyze their performance and progress. They form an annual cycle of environmental management, which will go each year, to identify both the difficulties that have arisen and achievements and recommendations for the future.

Keywords: tourism, hospitality unit, environmental action, environmental management

1. Introduction

Hospitality industry represents one of the most dynamic sectors of modern society with a pronounced role in the globalization process. In the current period, hospitality industry and the top managers from this sector do not face only the challenges of the economic crisis, but they also face the market changes, consumer behavior and technological trends [1].

In order to ensure the future of the tourism industry on a long term and also, the environmental development, we should appreciate the role that each company plays in protecting the environment for future generations. Environment protection in the tourism industry is a key

component of Total Quality Management and involves specific measures for each department [2].

Hospitality industry does not only mean services provided by hotels and restaurants, but by all organizations, companies and institutions providing accommodation and food service both for tourists and for people in the local community. As far as the specialty literature is concerned, there are still not specific guidelines about coverage area of the hospitality industry. Some authors limit the content of the industry accommodation and food services, and other authors consider the inclusion of leisure services and product marketing. Much broader approaches include in the hospitality industry and other activities, as well as transport, health or education [3].

In the literature of the field, one can find three approaches regarding tourism and hospitality industry: the first approach, the American one,

* Corresponding author: Băneș Adrian, Tel. 040256441424, Email: abanes@gmail.com

where the tourism is a part of the hospitality industry, along with other activities; the European approach where hospitality is a part of tourism; the two fields are independent, even though on a common ground. A broader definition of hospitality industry incorporates all commercial activities involving a host - guest relationship type, not just those of catering, accommodation and entertainment [1].

Hospitality industry has a dominant position within the tourism industry, both directly through revenues generated by providing millions of jobs worldwide, and because of its global nature, as a branch of the tourism sector. Globally, the concern for the environment is growing, also among travel operators and tourism industry. Each unit hotel has its own identity, its characteristics, and therefore, it is necessary to use and apply specific information about the environment, so as to create their own pro- active policy for the protection of the environment. It must be carried out an overview of environmental issues affecting the company and the performance that it has.

Each hotel must adhere to "green" hotel chart, pledging to take the following actions:

- a) to perform practices to protect the environment throughout its operation;
- b) to comply with all environmental legislation;
- c) to minimize the use of energy, water and raw materials;
- d) to minimize waste and reduce, reuse and recycle resources consumed by the company whenever possible;
- e) to reduce pollution to a minimum and, where possible, to treat discharged wastewater;
- f) to invite customers, suppliers and wholesalers to participate in efforts to protect the environment;
- g) to act, where possible, with others in the tourism industry, public agencies and the local community to achieve several objectives on environmental protection;
- h) to ensure staff training and resources to achieve objectives;
- i) to inform those concerned about politics and environmental practices;
- j) to monitor and record the environmental impact of actions on a regular basis and compare performance with policy, objectives and goals.

Organic operation must be introduced through a program of continuous improvement of the unit; this will explain the steps to be taken in the introducing the concept of ecologic management.

The concept of ecological management arose in the past two decades in response to the desire for sustainable development.

Ecological management as a part of complex socio-economic management system cannot develop if it is not taken into account, status and trends of its development stage to promote reforms in other areas, and acceptability and education of society for reforms in ecological management having in mind the conditions where social and political problems gather.

Environmental management is a component of the general management system which includes organizational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining environmental policies [4].

Preventing environmental degradation and ensuring environmental safety is a task that can be achieved only if effective environmental management organization at all hierarchical levels, which can provide synergistic interaction required, which creates prerequisites for an efficient organization and administration of environmental protection.

All hotels, no matter how small, are a burden to the environment because they generate the following impacts:

- Consumption of raw materials, water, energy to provide services to tourists;
- Use of harmful substances;
- Generate waste and wastewater and produce emissions that pollute;
- Many of the products bought, have environmental impacts associated with their way of manufacturing, use and disposal.

There are many measures that hotels can take, but the problem is to know where to start - how to define the most suitable areas for action will bring real benefits for the environment and benefit the company. All these vary from one hotel to another because of differences in operational characteristics and consumers, the starting point being that some hotels have already taken environmental protection measures in legislation in one country or another, in local and regional priorities on environment.

Environmental protection policies should bring multiple benefits to hoteliers. On the one hand an increase in business volume and on the other hand, significant reductions in operating costs which

means more profit. Thereby results: less consumption and therefore lower costs; customer loyalty and a better public image; attract and retain dedicated staff; long-term benefits [5]. The attitude towards the environment, although extremely difficult to quantify, pronounced quite negative effects and long term. There are concerns and even solutions to reduce negative impacts, such as educating and involving local communities in the environmentally responsible actions, measurement and reduction of various forms of pollution (waste management, water and energy consumption reduction, etc.). In those circumstances, the implementation of an environmental management system at each hotel units would provide to the hotel industry a sustainability feature, namely environmental responsibility [6].

2. Materials and methods

Environmental management has a particular importance both theoretical and applied, especially in the context of aggravating ecological situation, which determines the need for a more efficient organization and administration of environmental protection. Each unit hotel policy must be based on real consumer demand for tourist services - as an active and conscious part - along with unit staff. Planning environmental actions of a hotel unit must go through several stages. Preparing environmental actions of a hotel unit, means environmental control that should help in taking decisions on the most important measures that would benefit the unit. This paper addresses theoretical aspects of implementing the concept of ecological management in a hospitality unit, part of the hospitality industry by creating a content analysis of the topic addressed.

3. Results and discussion

As part of tourism activity hospitality industry affects environmental quality. If is not exceed a limit considered critical, the impacts from hotel activity is acceptable and even reduced through proper and responsible management. Acceptance is determined, on one hand, by the benefits to the local community and on the other hand, the fact

that the negative impact is smaller compared to other economic activity (it may be developed in the area) who generates income for the local population [6].

Implementing the concept of environmental management in a hospitality unit includes: motivation, planned actions, and their performance, analyze the progress achieved.

They form an annual cycle of ecological management, a cycle to go through each year in order to identify both difficulties and achievements that occurred, and recommendations for the future. The first stage, motivation, represents an integration stage of the initiative in the company. At this stage, a person is appointed to coordinate and implement programs and staff to communicate objectives. This person should have strong knowledge in the operation of hotel units, to enjoy the respect of staff devoted to the project, to enjoy the support of managers and ensure getting good results. Staff motivation is an important condition; they must be told the objectives in order to obtain their support by gathering information and their ideas. The manager must act first showing staff how to take environmental measures, which will determine their commitment to the initiative to introduce the concept of environmental management in the hospitality unit.

Also, by participating at various activities, such as local initiatives and national subscription to magazines about the environment, determines a better understanding of the problems and of how others approach it, a fact that will increase the reputation in the hospitality industry. Action planning is the second step in implementing the concept of ecological management, stage involving the following basic steps: review of priority areas, plan preparation and goal setting. Reviewing priority areas is particularly important, it will set the standard against which to measure progress, it will identify options for improvement, but without giving up other operational criteria. Preparation of the plan includes: deciding on measures to be taken, defining the stages of implementation of each measure, appointing responsible and the date for achieving the objectives. Setting goals has as a purpose to create clear models to do the reporting. In developing the action plan we should prioritize the measures to be taken in compliance with legislation, best management practices, investments to become

profitable soon, operational and environmental terms.

Achieving success and realization of actions, depends on the following factors: personal training plans, support, publication of results, good environmental practice must become part of the company culture and management. The last stage involves analyzing progress tasks: monitoring and analyzing annual progress. To verify if the plan works, in order to achieve its objectives it is required monitoring processes, monitoring to be carried out frequently in order to allow corrective actions on the action plan. Also, annual progress must be examined in a report by the advocate program or an independent consultant. Annual analysis must include a resumption of environmental verification to assess progress and establish a new order of priorities. Priorities will include: a summary of achievements against goals, discussion of the staff involved to identify difficulties encountered and achievements and future recommendations. The analysis is very important because it highlights problem areas, but identifies the best suitable approach to environmental management. The complexity of specific activities in the tourism requires a systemic approach to the processes causing prompt managerial decisions, fair and effective on all levels. This is possible only due to a better knowledge of the activities of field components by all those involved in specific processes.

Demonstrating the need to implement environmental management systems into the hotel and the openness recognition by providing opportunities for the certification of products and tourist accommodation from ecological point of view, inevitably lead to an increase in interest for the implementation of a performance management with minimal impact of the hotel business on environment, with quality service and increased welfare of local communities [6].

4. Conclusions

In order to plan environmental actions there are several steps to follow. Training is required to show how they can start a feasible program on

environmental protection, identifying those areas where measures are most needed and useful. Thus, it is necessary to verify the environmental actions of key departments and present ideas that managers and staff can use immediately. They will include sections on motivation, planning actions, their performance, analyze progress. It is therefore necessary to focus efforts on a number of six major areas of environmental protection on which one can act, namely: energy, solid waste, water, wastewater and emissions, wholesalers and suppliers, problems of the company. Therefore, it is necessary a detailed analysis of these areas, according to the priority chosen, preparing an action plan and monitoring progress, and if there is a need for further information or technical assistance, clarifications or additional support from existing associations should be provided.

Preparation of a hotel's environmental actions, involves biological control that should help in taking decisions regarding the most important measures that will benefit the unit. Thus, we offer an overview of environmental issues affecting the company and the performance that it has.

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