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**CREATING LONG-TERM RELATIONS IN TRAVEL  
AGENCIES WITHIN PARTNERSHIP MARKETING**

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*In the following paper the opportunities of applying the partnership marketing in the tourism have been shown. The advantages of creating, enriching and maintaining long-term and individualised relations have been presented. The importance of the mutual relations in the partnership marketing concept in the tourism has been shown. Moreover the satisfaction and trust among customers and organisers have been pointed out. The last important matter which has been presented was the tightening relations by the use of the loyalty programmes in tourism.*

**Keywords:** *marketing, tourism marketing, partnership marketing, relation, satisfaction, trust.*

**Setting the task in general form.** In tourism the possibility of applying traditional marketing which has impersonal nature is limited, while the use of partnership marketing would result in the creation, enrichment and maintenance of long-term, personalized relationship with tourists. In addition, individualized and personalized approach is applicable in tourism. The concept of partnership marketing emphasizes the management process ie. the creation, development and maintenance of business relationships with other entities. The basic idea behind the concept of partnership marketing is relationship. The bond is what connects and unites, unites people together. [6, p. 171].

Liljander V. and Strandvik T. define the relationship from the operational point of view and argue that the relationship is due within episodes. To bond occurred, they are required at least two contacts at least two sides. A similar statement has K. Storbacka who writes that a bond is established as a result of a series of interactions. E. Gummertson stresses that the condition to establish long-term relationships is the lack of compulsion, freedom of partners. J. G. Barnes suggests that it is necessary to realize the existence of the unions of mutual relations (non-fulfillment of this condition means that the link has not been established) [3, p. 61].

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** Until recently, the subject of partnership marketing in the aspect of relations with tourists was not often raised in theoretical considerations. Currently, there are more publications about partnership marketing.

Problems of partnership marketing in general and in tourist agencies are showed in the works of such scientists, as: Burnett [2], Furtak [3], Otto [4], Pabian [5], Sprinivasan [7]. Especially the use of partnership marketing activities were investigated in the writings of Furtak [3], Otto [4], Burnett [2]. They examined and revealed the essence of partnership marketing.

**The aims of the article** is to draw attention to the benefits of applying partnership marketing and especially building relations with the customers – tourists in tourist agencies. The article shows proposal for creating and maintaining relations and partnership between tourist agencies and customers – tourists.

**Main material.**

**The importance of ties and relationships in the concept of partnership marketing**

The concept of partnership marketing exposes the direct, interactive, double and multilateral nature relationship between the seller – a tourist office and a tourist and other entities – eg representatives of hotels, transport -in the formation and delivery of products and services with tourism. In addition, this concept underlines the enduring nature of the relationship between exchange partners. Creating and maintaining these relationships takes time, effort and money. A consequence of the concept of partnership marketing is to direct the activities of travel agencies from the transaction towards building long-term and stable relations with tourists, while in the traditional approach the main objective is the constant search for and acquire new buyers of tourist services. The concept of partnership marketing draws attention to the need to offer tourists value, which increasingly needs to exceed their expected benefits. Travel agencies should be interested in a permanent bond with tourists and appreciate the partnership, as a tourist attaches to them, as well as attached to the services offered during the tourist stay. Many tourists feel the need to maintain ties over a longer period of time. The partnership between tour operators and tourists is beneficial for both sides but it should be noted that you can not enforce it. The ideal partnership would be a situation in which both the tourist office and the pilgrims would be interested in creating a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship. In the relationship should be involved two sides. Relationship should be characterized by devotion, the possibility of making compromises, mutual trust and respect, communication, support, care, help, thinking in terms of the long-term. The bond is linked with the concept of exchange. The essence of market behavior is the exchange of value between the parties of the compound [3, p. 62]. Both travel agencies and tourists should put effort into exchanges and feel the benefit of the relationship. The

exchange between tour operators and tourists are receiving certain intangible and giving something in return. Tourists agencies give the expected service offer tourist and specific benefits of maintaining relationships with them in the period between tourist trips.

With the passage of time the ties are evaluating. The period within which this relationship is established and continue, can be divided into several phases:

- preliminary phase – ends when a potential tourist becomes a real tourist, the choice by a tourist means establishing ties with him;

- phase continuation of a relationship – it is the duration of the bond with the client, the tourist has a lot of the organizers, during which the exchange of value is observed, the bond is maintained and even strengthened;

- phase of finishing of the relationship – the beginning of this stage is usually the time taken by a tourist decision to choose another tour operator.

The tourist may also decide that the service is no longer needed. This phase can be regarded as an initial step, although it is much harder to persuade tourists to return to the former than acquire a new one [3, p. 88].

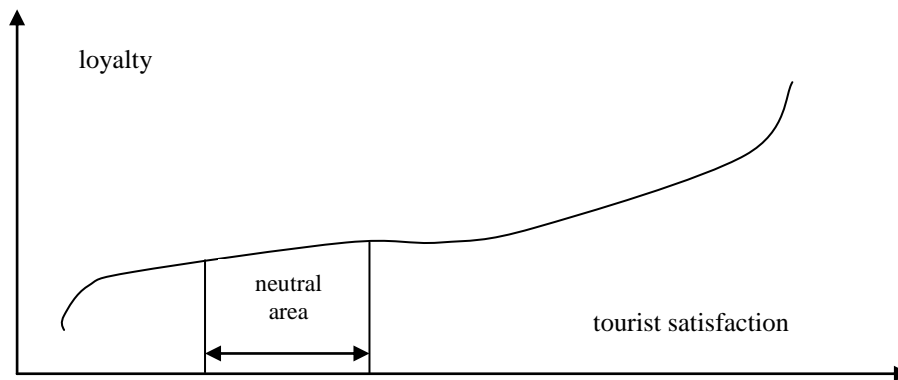
There is also the concept of the life cycle of customer relationships (the customer relationship life cycle – CRLC). In the case of the relationship with tourist, potential tourist is in the beginning phase. If the tourist discover that the offer can satisfy his needs, he decides to make use of this offer. Now there is the second stage of CRLC, called the purchase process. In this phase the potential tourist estimates and values the services by confronting perceptions and expectations with reality. If the outcome of the evaluation is satisfactory, the tourist makes the first purchase and becomes a real client. This marks the start of the third phase associated with the process of service consumption. Using the services period for tourists is when he has the opportunity to observe the functioning of the organization of the travel agency. This causes some tourist meetings with the organizers. The greater satisfaction from the contacts with the organizers who provide the service, the more likely extension of this relationship. Completion of the consumption of the service does not necessarily mean the loss of tourist. The tourist may decide to re-purchase a similar service, or change the tourist agency and purchase the offer there. [3, p. 89-90]. The factor influencing the size of the total profit of customer service is the length of the duration of the relationship. An important is identification of extending this period.

### **Satisfaction and trust as the basis of functioning of trade between the tourist office and tourists**

Quality of tourism services is related to the satisfaction of tourists, which is linked to the overall interest to accompany the consumption of tourist services. In order to satisfy tourists, the organizers should have an adequate detect changes in their needs and respond quickly [2, p. 21].

Satisfaction is a response to meet expectations. It is the sense that the service provided a satisfactory level in meeting the expectations, including cases surpass expectations and their non-compliance. The condition of satisfaction is not only the precise fulfillment of expectations. Satisfaction also appears in case of exceeding expectations, if exceeded is ultimately desired and unexpected advantages at a time [3, p. 146]. Satisfaction occurs when a product meets expectations, and dissatisfaction when it cannot meet them [4, p. 81].

If the client – a tourist is very pleased with the tourist stay and service agency, it is conducive to the emergence of strong emotional ties with the office, which shapes customer loyalty. The relationship between the level of customer satisfaction and loyalty levels shown below.



**Fig. 1. The functional relationship between customer satisfaction and his loyalty (based on [4, p. 13]).**

Customers buying tourist services, they need a sense of security and confidence to the organizers. The relationship between them is necessary to trust. By C. Grönroos partnership marketing philosophy is based on relationships with customers, whose essence is mutual trust, and not hostility [3, p. 164]. In contrast, W. B. Seal introduces the concept of «organization based on trust». We have here not only increasing the confidence of customers, but also about building trust within the organization. D. T. Wilson and S. Jantrania see the confidence in the context of the relationship and come to the conclusion that it promotes a deep relationship education. R.M. Morgan, S.D. Hunt argue that trust is the basis of each partner exchange [3, p. 164-165]. Customers expect trust and they can rely on the word given by the tourist office at the service desk. Trust also means the risk taken by the trust endowed unfavorable for the bestowal actions. K. Giffin believes that trust occurs when a person:

- involves another person;
- risking the loss;
- attempts to achieve some goal [3, p. 165].

To be able to talk about trust, it is necessary to believe in the good intentions of the partner, resulting from his behavior, characterized by reliability and surely. Both customers – tourists and tour operators also play a role gifted and a bestowal confidence. Important, from the point of view of confidence, attributes seller – the organizer are: reliability, integrity, honesty, competence, customer orientation and kindness [3, p. 166].

W. B. Pearce defines trust as «subjective probability that the other party will act in such a way that it will be able to rely on it». Confidence in this approach is called cognitive trust. Cognitive trust occurs when a person assumes, despite clear evidence that the behavior will not have negative consequences [3, p. 166].

According to the theory of Pearce, it is possible to maintain a person's evidence of confidence in the absence of cognitive trust: tourist chooses the organizers departure (despite the lack of confidence in just those organizers) because they are only available for him, the organizers of tourist trips. In addition, the customer that trusts often acts in a way that does not express this confidence: tourist did not choose the organizers of departure (despite the confidence just to them), because they do not feel the need. Also, R. Craswell, treat the trust as a kind of behavior (customer – tourist tourism service purchased from selected organizers) and as an explanation of behavior (as a tourist just that the organizers of the trusts). When we have the information only on the behavior of the provider of trust (tourist bought a tourist service in selected organizers), there are many possible reasons for such behavior, while in the second case (because the organizers of the tourist just trust) trust, to a lesser or greater extent, affects it behavior [3, p. 166-167].

The trust occurs when there is some risk and uncertainty as to the effects of exchange partner activities, and at the same time, when the behavior of an entity endowed trust are to some extent predictable [3, p. 168-169].

### **Customer loyalty – tourist and maintaining ties**

A necessary condition for the continuation of ties between tourists and the organizers of tourist trips is attachment to a partner replacement. According to L.L. Berry and A. Parasurman «foundation of relationship is a mutual affection» [1, p. 107, 144], while according to Scanzoni «attachment is the most advanced phase of interdependence». The same approach is presented R.M. Morgan, S.D. Hunt, who think that «attachment is a key element of the concept of partnership marketing». A characteristic feature of tourists who are united by deep bonds of tourist office is not only a high level of confidence but also attachment [3, p. 170]. According to Morgan and Hunt's commitment to «maximize effort to maintain a relationship with a partner replacement». According to C. Moorman, G. and R. Deshpandes Zaltman «attachment is a constant desire to continue the valuable ties». From the above definition, the prerequisites for attachment are: the perception of the

relationship as an important and, resulting from this fact, the desire to maintain and deepen ties [3, p. 170-171].

The literature shows three factors which most strongly influence customer loyalty to the tourist service providers – the tourist office:

- the level of consumer trust (tourist);
- consumer satisfaction (the tourist) – organizers should cause that the level of satisfaction of the customers is still growing [5, p. 23];
- degree of dependence between the exchange operators [3, p. 171].

Customers – tourists are interested in creation of the relation because in this way they can receive the expected value. In such relationships there is a high level of trust, which increases the value of the compound which stimulates the customers' propensity to engage in relationships. The same is true of satisfaction, which increases confidence, which in turn affects the customer's involvement in connection with the tourist office. With the attachment it is also related to the notion of the degree of dependence between tourists and tour operators. When the level of tourist according to the organizers is higher, the tourist shows a greater tendency to continue the relationship [3, p. 171]. Attachment may take the form of emotional connection or the calculated relationship. Emotional relationship is based on affection, friendship and deep ties. Partners in this relationship want to stay in the relationship and to continue the relationship [3, p. 172].

In the case of tourism the relation between partners (tourists and tour organizers) is based on emotions. Both partners want to continue the relationship and stay in a relationship. The relation is more influenced by emotion than satisfaction.

Another concept associated with attachment is engagement [9, p. 164]. Thanks to the commitment there is motivation to act. The tourists are motivated to act. But not everyone has it in the same way as their involvement can be different, small or large. The decrease in the level of commitment or its growth can play a key role in sustaining relationships. Very active in maintaining relationships with customers.

### **Strengthening ties with customers – tourists through the applying loyalty programs**

Travel agencies should focus their attention on the regular customers. Loyal travel agency creates loyalty of its customers – tourists [8, p. 17]. The way to work with these client groups is the use of loyalty programs. The aim of the loyalty programs is to reward solid, selected customers by providing them attractive tourist offer. Loyalty between offices and customers – tourists can take years [4, p. 221-222].

Travel agencies should identify a group of customers with whom they maintain close ties, as well as designate the person responsible for caring relationships with

those clients. These people know the scope of their duties and within a year they plan its cooperation with customers. Through the use of loyalty programs tourist agencies are able to initiate contacts, inform about new tourist projects, encourage customers – tourists, as well as protect themselves against competition [7, p. 17].

Forms loyalty programs applicable in tourism can be the following: loyalty card, which entitles to discounts, travel magazines sent to regular customers, lists of the tourist office to clients containing information on departure, tourists clubs for clients of tourist services, touristic events organized for regular customers that are conducive to the formation of family atmosphere between offices and customers – tourists [4, p. 229]. The use of the above programs values customers and they feel honored actively participating in the process of creating shared value of a tourist trips.

**Conclusions and directions of further researches.** In conclusion it is needed to note that the organizers of tourist travels should not treat customers in a mass way. It should be noted that the goal of the organizers should be not only to acquire a customer, but to build long-term relationships with them as partners. The research of applying partnership marketing will influence on the achieving success in the market. The paper shows the advantages of applying the partnership marketing and effectiveness of its use in the company. In conclusion, it should be added that the travel agencies should change the approach to customer partnerships.

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**СТВОРЕННЯ ДОВГОСТРОКОВИХ ВІДНОСИН В ТУРИСТИЧНИХ  
АГЕНТСТВАХ ЧЕРЕЗ ПАРТНЕРСЬКИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ**

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*У статті розглянуті можливості застосування партнерського маркетингу в туризмі. Представлені переваги створення, збагачення і підтримки довгострокових та індивідуальних відносин. Показана важливість взаємин в концепції партнерського маркетингу в туризмі. Крім того, акцентовано на задоволенні і довірі клієнтів та організаторів. Останнє представлене питання – це укріплення відносин через використання програм лояльності в туризмі.*

***Ключові слова:** маркетинг, маркетинг туризму, партнерський маркетинг, ставлення, задоволення, довіра.*

**СОЗДАНИЕ ДОЛГОСРОЧНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ В  
ТУРИСТИЧЕСКИХ АГЕНТСТВАХ ЧЕРЕЗ ПАРТНЕРСКИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ**

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*В статье рассмотрены возможности применения партнерского маркетинга в туризме. Представлены преимущества создания, обогащения и поддержки долгосрочных и индивидуальных отношений. Показана важность взаимоотношений в концепции партнерского маркетинга в туризме. Кроме того, акцентировано на удовлетворении и доверии клиентов и организаторов. Последний представленный вопрос – это укрепление отношений через использование программ лояльности в туризме.*

***Ключевые слова:** маркетинг, маркетинг туризма, партнерский маркетинг, отношение, удовлетворение, доверие.*