

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURIST BRAND

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The accession of Bulgaria to the European Union and the trends towards globalization of the world gradually has drawn into its orbit the different sectors of the Bulgarian economy. Free trade in the community poses Bulgarian producers of goods and services many challenges associated with the high competition in the market with established providers in each sector of production and service. The only option to get out of the anonymity of the producers in the European Union is the establishment and registration of an own trade mark. Issues related to the creation and management of brands comes to the attention of theorists and practitioners in the field of services, particularly in tourism.

Key words: brand, branding, trade-mark

Introduction. Contemporary tourist market has a lot of features but the most important are its dynamics and prospects of development. Competition in the tourism sector becomes increasingly fierce and requires that every tour company continually proves its superiority over its competitors. Today, the tourism products of a company to compete with equally good and attractive, not only in the particular destination, and in different parts of the world.

In addition, it is showing the negatives of a global financial, economic, and as their consequence – and social crisis. The behavior of the entire tourist market remodeling and need new behavior for tourism enterprises. Namely – not to blindly follow the dynamics of the market situation and make their own loyal customers. The trend is to build confidence among different user segments by creating a positive corporate reputation. When budgets allocated for marketing, advertising and PR did not yield the expected results, it is logical to look for new opportunities to influence consumers. This is impossible without changing communication – traditionally public communication is becoming less effective in a pivotal and dynamic environment.

The purpose of this paper is to present the brand as a real opportunity to impose tourist enterprises with a unified vision in the minds of potential tourists. Following the experience of the leading destinations and tourism enterprises in the formation of strong and competitive brands is an opportunity for Bulgaria and Bulgarian tourist enterprises to impose a single vision in the minds of potential tourists.

This need has been recognized at the national level, as evidenced by the studies carried out under the project «Development of a strategy for brand» Bulgaria «and the introduction of integrated and consistent brand management.» The project was implemented by the end of 2011 by the Ministry of Economy and Energy Operational Programmer «Regional Development». The project aims to increase the effectiveness of advertising of Bulgaria as a tourist destination by developing a strategy for the brand in the country, including product sub-brands for different types of tourism – marine, winter activities, cultural, eco and rural tourism, spa, etc....

The specialized economic literature often «brand» and «brand» are used synonymously. Is this correct is debatable issue worth considering.

1. Theoretical formulation of the place of the brand among the marketing communications in the tourist business

The communication system of the tourist venture includes various models of alone or combined use of advertising, public-relations, sales promotion, sponsorship, promotion, propaganda, branding (creation

and communication of brands) and direct marketing [4, p. 95]. Nowadays balanced communication policy is one tool to enhance the competitiveness of tourist enterprises.

Communication policy in tourism is implemented at three levels:

- **the national level** – the system for a national advertising campaign for the presentation of Bulgarian tourism. This requirement is enshrined in Article 6 of the Law on Tourism [6] in the person of the Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism and the National Tourism Council.

- **at the branch level**, such a communications policy for promoting and advertising the hotel and restaurant product is accomplished by the Association of Bulgarian Tour Operators and Travel Agents, Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents, Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism Council Tourism – Sofia, the Association of Hotels and Restaurants – Velingrad, National Association for child and youth tourism, the Bulgarian Union of Balneology and Spa Tourism, the National Association of Spa Wellness Tourism, the Regional Tourism Association Rhodope Tourist Guide Association, the Association of Specialized experts in tourism industry and others.

- **On the enterprise level and individual tourist site.** Building a marketing communication system of tourist development follows the development of marketing itself, as presented in Pic. 1 [4, p. 95].

As can be seen from the figure, marketing and communications used by tourism businesses evolve. Means of communication is directed personally to the individual tourist. Investigates individual preferences, the segment and the psychological profile of the tourist. Modern marketing is more than just developing the best product, the formation of the most attractive for its value and move it to the target consumer segment.

It is with this purpose, a set of marketing communications, or so-called communication mix. Tourism enterprises manage complex systems of communication links. They have relationships with their brokers, consumers and various members of the public. Intermediaries, in turn, have a communication relationship with their customers, build relationships or communicate directly with each other. In tourism necessarily each group creates a feedback with other groups because they sell specific products that require continuous and accurate information.

Tourism enterprises must carry out continuous communication with current and potential customers. For this reason, each company began to act as a source of communication and generate various tools to boost sales. Tourist development using modern

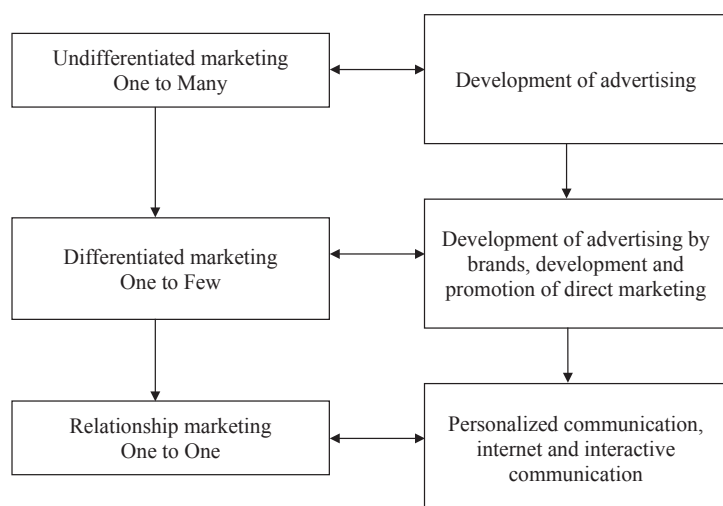


Fig. 1. Stages in the development of marketing and communication

Adapted from: Rakadzhivska, S., Marinov, Stefan. *Marketing in tourism. Varna, Science and Economics, 2004, p. 95*

methods of communication. This includes **advertising, publicity, direct marketing (personal sales) and public relations (PR)**. Modern methods of communication used in conjunction with other elements of the marketing mix, specific funds are combined into a single program to promote.

Advertising is a targeted form of communication spread by sources (advertisers) against payment in various promotional tools and media.

Announcing is a type of means of communication, the information about the tourist product, and partly for tourist development is not broadcast by it, but by a neutral face. It also is unincorporated and paid for the communication. Often such persons are using people who are «opinion leaders.» Under personal sales (direct marketing) given the immediate contact of the tourist venture with one or more potential customers to present the tourist product and make the sale. Stimulating sales are short measures designed to encourage purchases or sales of tourist products and services.

Under the Public Relations (PR) is an often understood relations activity of the tourist venture with the public, aimed at creating and maintaining a good relationship with the tourism industry, tourists, public and community organizations.

The ad is suitable for drawing attention and creating interest among potential users to tourism goods and services. Techniques of personal selling is more suitable for users at provoke a specific desire to acquire the tourist product. With even greater effect on sales promotion is the use of advertising techniques from personal sales, supported by PR and most other forms of stimulation. The identity of tourist development is associated with advertising constants. Among advertising constants falls brand that tourism businesses become brand. Brand personality is developed that identifies the product, the service, the company, the state or the individual (name, term, sign, symbol, design or combination of them) and acts in a certain way on the minds and expectations of key target audience: customers, employees, partners, investors, community organizations and others.

2. The brand – an opportunity for the tourist industry

According to the laws of branding, a strong brand is focused in providing a particular activity and tourism products to be perceived as a leading enterprise in the destination. If now develop and strengthen this brand before its competitors, it becomes a strong and focused on market category – it becomes a leader.

In a study published in The McKinsey Quarterly [8], recognizing that «the economic success of the state in the global competitive struggle is important how consumers perceive its image. The global tourism market not only compete tourism enterprises, but also the states. The decision of tourists to choose a destination for holidays affecting factors related not only to tourism resources, but also the political, economic and social stability of the state. A European Commission on 30.06.2010 by the European Committee and other higher authorities noted that [9]: «The European

tourism industry, has about 1.8 million enterprises, mainly SMEs, which employ about 5.2% of the active population (about 9.7 million jobs, the share of young people is significant)¹, representing more than 5% of EU GDP, and this figure is constantly growing. In this sense, tourism is the third most important socio-economic activity in the EU in retail and construction sectors².

Taking into account the related sectors, its contribution to GDP is even more significant, as it is believed that it represents more than 10% of EU GDP and provides 12% of all jobs. In this respect the last ten years the increase in the number of jobs in the tourism sector almost always been more pronounced than in the rest of the economy».

As is evident from the above statements, tourism is an economic activity that generates growth and jobs, the EU, while contributing to the development and economic and social integration, particularly in rural and mountainous areas, coastal regions and islands, remote and very remote regions or those in the process of convergence.

Reorientation of tourists to Europe in 2011 as the most preferred destination (28% compared to 2010) proved this thesis. According to research by the World Tourism Organization [10] (WTO) visits to Europe from 385.1 million in 2008 rose to 502.8 million in 2011, occupying 51.3% of the visits of tourists in the world.

Development of a single brand of the EU in terms of continent «Europe» [11] is enshrined in the European development strategy «Europe 2020». Bulgaria is part of the European family and should take account of this fact in the development and promotion of its brand. The value of the brand is the economic benefit it brings to the country destination and now. Benefits to consumers from purchasing goods and services to a brand can be real or illusory, rational or emotional. Incorporating bidirectional in the perception of the brand in terms of drafting it from the user's perspective, we can say that the brand has built a set of expectations in consumer awareness of the essence, attributes, its products and services it seeks

¹ Traditional suppliers of travel and tourism services (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, car rental, charter airlines, buses, cruise ships, etc.) that provide goods and services directly to visitors.

² In particular, the dealership and construction, transport services for enterprises in general (air, rail, marine, bus, etc.) and cultural sector (entertainment industry).

satisfies a long period of time.

The issue of poorly positioned image of «Bulgaria» as a tourist destination is realized by both theoreticians and practitioners in the field of tourism. As appealing V. Baleva [3, p. 25]: «The image of Bulgaria, which is already part of the EU can be improved or deteriorated since the image of Bulgarian enterprises, industries and commodity brands, and this should be considered a liability of the business. It should not be forgotten, however, and feedback – the image of the Bulgarian brands can improve or degrade the image of the Bulgarian state, and it is the responsibility of the government.»

In response to this call may be recorded by the Bulgarian government initiatives that are being developed in line with European initiatives to develop tourism as a priority sector. The project «Development of a strategy for brand» Bulgaria «and the introduction of integrated and consistent brand management» government declares its responsibility for the brand of Bulgaria as a tourist destination. The destination government launched a project «Communication campaign to promote the EDEN destinations in Bulgaria»³, which aims at presenting Bulgaria as a destination for alternative tourism and promoting its ability to offer new tourism products, primarily in the areas of environmental, cultural and spa tourism. In a broader sense, the project contributes to overcoming the traditional Bulgarian tourism issues, such as regional and seasonal concentration of tourist flows and mono structural nature of the tourism product.

In connection with the promotion of entrepreneurship in tourism, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism promotes prepared 'Guide to tourism «project» Communication campaign to promote domestic tourism in Bulgaria [13]» with which to promote domestic tourism.

Overall government intervention in tourism is to create a framework and conditions for the development and promotion of tourism as an activity. Recognized fact is that the best policy is created not through restrictive measures such as the introduction of new taxes or raising taxes, but by incentives – preferential loans, visa facilitation, building better infrastructure by the state and not . Unfortunately there is still no specific measures related to credit on preferential terms of tourism, in terms of infrastructure there is still much to be desired, and visa facilitation with respect to major markets (such as Russia) have not been solved completely.

3. Protection of the brand through trademark registration

'Brand' is seen as a system that connects the product with its features and brand in consumers' minds. It can be considered as a concept of the manufacturer (seller) regarding its products, users and brand.

Considered in their relationship and dependence trademarks and brands are often regarded as synonymous. Notwithstanding this strong correlation between brand differentiation and brand sought by many authors [5, p. 34]: '(1) brand shows market relations between the subject of consumption (the con-

sumer) and the object of consumption (products) that relations only within certain limits can be controlled by the subject of ownership of brand (manufacturer), while the concept of brand reveals property relations (the manufacturer owns the brand), (2) a labeled brand product becomes a brand only in and through the experience of the user and never out of this experience, whether that experience is practical (use) or «theoretical» (picture of the brand, not if it is based on its use), (3) the product is marked with a mark is made in the factory and the brand – in society and markets and its «manufacturers» are also customers (actual and potential), mass media and mediators agencies (advertising, consulting, research and PR agencies, blogs and forums, academic educational institutions, publications, etc.), (4) The brand can be achieved without the presence of a registered trademark of the product precisely because specified ahead considerations.»

From the above it can be concluded that «brand» is seen as a system that connects the product with its performance and the brand in consumers' minds. It can be considered as a concept of the manufacturer (seller) regarding its products, users and brand.

On the other hand tourism enterprises are also developing their own image and impose their individual brands. The Nice Classification⁴ tourism activities can be registered in Class 39 [14, p. 14] – Transport, packaging and storage of goods, travel arrangement, Class 41[14, p. 20] -Education, training, entertainment, sporting and cultural activities and class 43[14, p. 26] -Restaurants, temporary accommodation.

In reference to the state register, which is kept by the Patent Office can take account of changes per year for the period 2001-2011 on registered trade marks in these three classes. (refer to Pic. 2)

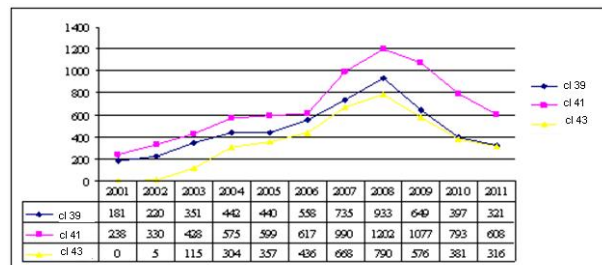


Fig. 2. Number of registered trade marks in classes 39,41,43 for the period 2001-2011 the Bulgarian Patent Office

As can be seen from the figure the highest number of trademarks registered in class 41 – Education, training, entertainment, sporting and cultural activities. This is due to the wider range of services included in this class. The number of registered trademarks in class 43 Restaurants and temporary accommodation can be considered for presenting the most realistic situation of registered trademarks in the tourism sector. In this class, there is relatively increased in the period 2007-2009, which coincides with the in-

³ EDEN is the acronym for European Destinations of Excellence (Best European Destinations) - a project that promotes sustainable patterns of tourism in the entire European Union. The project is based on national competitions that take place every year in the selection of a tourist "destination of excellence" for each participating country. Through the selection of destinations, EDEN effectively achieves the objective of drawing attention to the value, diversity and shared characteristics of European tourist destinations. Enhances the visibility of emerging European destinations, creates a platform for exchange of good practices across Europe and promotes networking between awarded destinations. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/eden/what-is-eden/index_bg.htm

⁴ Nice Agreement Concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Registration of Marks, adopted on 06.15.1957, as revised at Stockholm on 14.07.1967, and at Geneva on 13.5.1977 and amended at Geneva on 02.10.1979 ratified by a law passed by the 38th National Assembly on 06.12.2000 - SG, iss. 6 of 19.01.2001 issued by the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, promulgated., SG. 64 of 20.07.2001, in force from 27.02.2001, the look. www.iusauthor.com

creasing number of hotel businesses since 2007. If we have to compare the number of hotel and restaurant businesses in 2007 – 22,046 units, with the registered trademark – 668 pcs., it only 0.030% of the hotel enterprises have registered their trademark. In 2010 the number of hotel and restaurant enterprises increased to 26,062 units. And the number of registered trademarks in this class down reaching 381 units, which is only 0.015% – double the 2007. The above data indicate declining interest among businesses in the tourism industry to register its own trademark. On the other hand the increase in the number of enterprises shows that the business develops. A reference in the Internet space can show that each hotel is your platform to be presented to potential users. Using their own sites, on-line booking sites and portals, entry into real and virtual catalogs of tour operators and travel agencies.

A wide range of brand and non-alignment with the mandatory registered trademark make it possible to develop specific tourism product at country, region, tourist enterprise. **It can be concluded that brand** in tourism is developed individuality that identify the product, service, company, state or individual (name, term, sign, symbol, design or combination of them) and act in a certain way on the minds and expectations of key target audience: customers, employees, partners, investors, community organizations and others.

4. Technology for building the tourist brand

Evolution of marketing theory puts the brand as a major competitive advantage for the enterprise in the twenty-first century, not the functional characteristics of the product and its differentiation, pricing and distribution policy [1, p. 36]. In this context, marketing is developing such a direction as «branding» – the process of integrated management of the brand, the products and the company in order to create positive long-term relationship with consumers.

The development of effective tourism brand is important to determine its **characteristics [2, p. 475]:**

- the essence of the brand (Brand Essence);
- functional and emotional associations that give rise to tourists and tourist intermediaries (Brand Attributes);
 - verbal element of the mark or sign verbal commodity (Brand Name);
 - visual image of the brand, formed by advertising in the minds of tourists (Brand Image);
 - the degree of awareness of the brand among consumers and intermediaries, strength of the brand (Brand Power);
 - a set of attributes of the brand that characterizes his personality (Brand Identity);
 - valuation, indicators for assessing the value of the brand (Brand Value);
 - the rate of growth of the brand (Brand development Index);
 - degree of popularity of the brand among the target audience and its specific target segments.

From these characteristics it can be concluded that not every trademark can become a brand. Commodity mark and trade mark must acquire knowledge about the market and gain confidence among tourists and intermediaries. Whether for a single product (Ritz-Carlton), a tourist enterprise (Club Med) or destination (Bulgaria) as a symbol, logo, letter initials, depends on their ability to produce unique associations in the consumer – as rational and emotional [4, p. 95].

Activities related to the brand building of a tourist site (for example, hotel) from the tourist development include the following stages [2, p. 475]:

First: product positioning of the hotel market, ie search and finding of products on the market, satisfying a set of user needs and perceptions of the hotel and destination. The position of the brand – it is the place that occupies the hotel brand in the minds of tourists to the products of competitors in the same or similar tourist destinations. You should answer the following questions: Who created for the hotel? Why, what benefit the user gets the products in this hotel? For what purposes need particular hotel? Of the competitive product or a competitor must now protect this new hotel or new product?

Second: the formation of strategy for the brand of the hotel, ie up a program of strategic importance for the whole tour company for imposing and brand management of the hotel. When creating a hotel tourist enterprise must decide whether his brand to lead (leader) or prefers to put it, «along with the other» in the market. As part of the strategy set: what is the target audience? What should promise that audience? How to support the tourists to this promise? What impression should leave branded hotel tourists?

Third: the development of content, the idea of the brand. The main idea of the brand should be a reflection of the promise, which is placed in the strategic planning of the hotel. To create a unique brand should be very familiar with the peculiarities of the tourism product of the hotel, only a tourist enterprise, destination and tourism resources, as well as those of competitors in the destination and competing destinations. The idea of the brand must be able to interest you and fascinate tourists to draw their attention to the brand and the product of the hotel. Furthermore, the creation of graphic and sound image of the brand of the hotel can take advice and specialized in branding companies, representatives of potential users, representatives of loyal consumers and others.

Fourth: analysis of the brand and search for the brand name of the hotel. A trademark is a cue which, through its association with this hotel provides the user with information about the product and its characteristics. She convinces tourists in that the purchase of this product it receives the quality of service as in the previous purchase. Furthermore, the brand enables tourists present in new products and objects of tourist development and to influence other market participants. The analysis of the trademark is necessary to pay attention to the following attributes: attractiveness, economy and communication in the positioning of the tourism product or hotel, ease of recognition among the products of competitors or their tourist sites.

Five: pre-testing of the brand in the market. Usually at this stage is an assessed consumer attitude towards different variations of the name of the hotel, the brand image design in furniture of the hotel. Test marketing allows you to select the optimal variant of several possibilities. During testing, it is possible to evaluate not only please our consumer brand, but also the degree of efficiency of communication with the target audience's perception of the individual elements of the brand and the importance of the proposed benefits. Pre-testing of the brand makes it possible to avoid errors, similarity with existing brands, or name of the hotel, which can mislead tourists.

Among all the components to create a brand most important is the name of the hotel, which is most often associated with the name of the tour company, or if it works mainly with tour operators – the name of intermediaries. Demand for the brand name is a

lengthy process requiring justification of proposals and decisions as long-lasting brand depends on the chosen name before promoting the product or tourist site among tourists in the target markets to build his image. Best known brands in the field of tourism are: world tour TUI, Airtours, Thomas Cook, Kuoni Travel, HotelBeds, Travco, Jacobs, among Bulgarian representatives ARISTOUR, BEST TRAVEL SERVICE, ALEXANDER TOUR COMPANY, Albena Tour and others. International brands in the hotel are mainly representatives of hotel chains such as InterContinental Hotel Group, Holiday Inn, Global Hyatt, Accor Group, Hilton Hotels, Marriott International, Wyndham Hotel Group, InterContinental Hotel Group and others., But there are a number of Bulgarian representatives as Radisson, Sheraton Sofia Balkan, Hilton Grand Hotel Varna, Bulgaria, Geneva, Central and others.

As can be seen in the names of the brands commonly found connection to the main tourist company founder owner of the business or destination.

Complexity in the choice of name and visual brand provoke tourism enterprises to find the best solution, since the principal difference between the product or tourist site and brand in their life cycle. Without managed brand, it follows the life cycle of the tourism product of the company – introduction, growth, maturity and decline in a relatively short time. But well-managed brand is practically immortal. Herein lies branding.

Branding is a policy for the brand of tourist development, or management of images through the use of integrated strategies and technologies of marketing and management. Branding [7, p. 54-55] is an activity that aims to create long-term preference for a tourism product or object, based on the combined effects of a strong brand name to consumers through communication mix. With the help of sales promotion and other promotional items are aimed at creating a brand image with which long have in consumers' minds with the image that distinguishes the products of the tourist development of the competition.

From the foregoing it can be concluded **that branding in tourism** is done by using certain methods that allow to approach developed brand to tourists not only to form in his mind an image of a particular brand, but also to assist users in their perceptions of functional and emotional elements of tourism products, facilities, businesses and destinations.

In branding there is a principle called «the principle of positioning» which has meant that the first tourist enterprise, tourist destination, tourist product in a particular destination is already taking its place in the mind of consumers, it is impossible to replace by another. For example: «Albena» the northern coast, a beach resort hotel «Dobrudja» as a hotel in the resort Pamporovo or as a mountain resort and hotel «Pamporovo» at the resort, or «Sheraton Hotel

Balkan» hotel as the epitome of urban and business tourism in Sofia. These are brands with established image, with superimposed associations in the minds of consumers that are directly related to tourism products – «rest more», «mountain recreation», «congresses».

The study concerning the regulation of the trademark made between trademark and brand, and presented public stance on tourism brand, make it possible to draw **several conclusions**:

First, the procedure for patent trademark can be used by tourism businesses to ensure years of validation and quality of tourist services in their tourist sites.

Second, tourism services go beyond the actual tourist business and need to build a positive image in the minds of consumers for a particular destination. This requires the development of a single brand through a joint effort between tourism enterprises, tourism associations and government bodies. Third, the development of an integrated strategy for year-round tourist brand «Bulgaria» to focus on the key benefits – «sun and beach», «snow skiing» and «destination with the best ratio between price and quality.»

Fourth, the data reviewed for cases of registered trademarks of tourism enterprises gives grounds to consider that a priority for the tourism sector is the construction of a brand of tourist sites and destinations rather than orientation towards a brand that officially registered. The creation of a unified strategy for tourist brand «Bulgaria» is the first step towards the unification of the efforts over the past decade tourism business, NGOs and government bodies to promote Bulgaria as a competitive tourist destination.

In conclusion it can be said that the brand is mainly a result of the communication activities of tourist development, but it is also affected by the activities of sales. Therefore the management of the brand over time requires coordination of communication activities with other activities in sales management. This coordination can be achieved by positioning strategy for the brand. Each of the management stages of branding – introduction, development and validation set conform positioning strategies implemented by the marketing mix. Positioning strategies enable users to understand the brands image of the input stage to perceive its value steady upward development phase and to generalize to other products on the tourist development stage approval.

Branding is an opportunity for Bulgarian tourist enterprises to impose their products in the minds of the tourists. Through the principles of branding they are able to offer brands with individual features to make changes to their current brands to maximize performance, track the image of their brands and create plans for anti-crisis management of their brands if necessary.

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РАЗВИТИЕ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОГО БРЕНДА

Аннотация

Вступление Болгарии к Европейскому союзу и тенденциям к глобализации мира постепенно вовлекало свою орбиту различные сектора болгарской экономики. Свободная торговля в сообществе излагает болгарских производителей товаров и услуг много проблем, связанных с высоким соревнованием на рынке с установленными поставщиками в каждом секторе производства и обслуживания. Единственным выбором выйти из анонимности производителей в Европейском союзе является учреждение и регистрация собственного товарного знака. Проблемы, связанные с созданием и управлением брендами, привлекают внимание теоретиков и практиков в области услуг, особенно в туризме.

Ключевые слова: бренд, брендинг, торговая марка