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Faculty of tourism and business logistics -  
Gevgelia

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# CHALLENGES OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS LOGISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Gevgelia, 24-25 October 2017 & Shtip, December 2017



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Faculty of tourism and business logistics – Gevgelija

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University of Kragujevac  
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## PREFACE

The Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics in Gevgelija, at the Goce Delcev University - Stip, hosted the First International Scientific Conference, "Challenges of Tourism and Business Logistics in the 21st Century".

The conference was held on 24 and 25 October 2017 in Gevgelija with an optional visit to Dojran - Dojran Lake.

32 works of 60 authors from Serbia, Latvia, Turkey, Poland, Bulgaria, Kosovo and Macedonia were presented at the Conference.

The purpose of the Conference is exchange of ideas and experiences of the participants coming from Macedonia and abroad, and establishment of cooperation for further development of tourism and business logistics in Macedonia and beyond.

The results of the Conference are visible through publication in a collection of papers, which is presented to a wider scientific audience and the public.

In this way, we want to promote the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, to promote Gevgelija and Dojran as the most visited settlements in the south-eastern part of Macedonia.

Gevgelija - Stip,  
December 2017

Editor  
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## THE IMPACT OF TEAMWORK ON THE QUALITY OF THE HOTEL PRODUCT

Lidija Simonceska<sup>1</sup>, Toni Cvetanoski<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*In a modern international environment, the quality of hotel services as a basic element of the tourism product is a major factor in the positioning of the hotel companies in the competitive tourism market. To be successful, hotel companies have to adapt their activities to the international quality standards and to practice the TQM principles. One of those principles is teamwork which has a major impact for innovative and effective decision making in the hotels. This kind of organization of work in the hotels has influence in creating a pleasant working environment and quality services for the guests and will lead to satisfaction and some incentive to become permanent customers.*

*In this context, the aim of this paper is to indicate the effectiveness of teamwork on the performance of hotel companies, with main focus on the quality of hotel services. This paper will explain the essence of the quality of these services and the effects that teams provide for the creation of quality hotel services. Special focus will be placed on the ways to increase the effectiveness of teamwork.*

**Key words:** *tourist product, quality of the hotel product, TQM, teams, types of teams, teamwork efficiency.*

### Introduction

The tourist product as a complex category contains a whole specter of elements for covering the tourist needs. As a market element it is the ultimate, i.e. final result of man's labor, which is evaluated in the market and with its use value confirms its social usefulness and justification. If we consider the three compositional dimensions of the product – its essence, the material product and the value-added product, the tourist product can also be grasped as an integration of goods and services that can be offered to the market in order to satisfy the heterogeneous, dynamic and complex tourist wish or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, distribution, organization and ideas. Thus understood, the tourist product represents a multidimensional creation of singular goods and services for transport, accommodation, food, sport and other recreational and educational

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activities, trading goods, national souvenirs, car rental, climate conditions, environment, cultural and historic heritage etc. Its basic component is the hotel product. The spatial, organisational, technical and technological characteristics of the hotel enterprises form the hotel product as a final result of labour, efforts and the art of hotel workers. For the guest as a consumer, the hotel product is a sum of tangible and intangible elements which he himself creates as a result of his frame of mind, wishes and needs. This means that there is always the possibility of including into the product new content and attractiveness, within the "productive" possibilities of the hotel's material and human resources capacities.

The quality satisfaction of tourist needs and demands is the basic condition for business success of the enterprises in the tourist industry, but also a decisive factor for their domination in the competitive race on the market. More and more does quantity give place to quality in the total process of work in the tourist offer in general, i.e. in the process of creating the tourist product. Thus, the hotels managers are faced with the task and responsibility of establishing a quality system based on adopted international quality standards, understanding quality and standard not as a goal, but as an efficient way, the best business strategy in achieving the basic goals – making of profit, growth and development. Managing the overall quality of hotels means establishing certain principals, among which team work is one of them.

#### 1. What is the quality of a tourist product

Starting from their demands and interests, the tourists in the process of services consumption constantly grade their quality, ready to turn to new, better and more attractive hotel package deal. As especially creative subjects, looking for a higher quality of services, tourists stimulate the quality development of the hotel product.

Referring to the definition of the International Organisation for Standardisation according to which the quality is a "sum of the features and characteristics of a product, process or a service, which refer to the possibility of satisfying established or indirect needs" (ISO 8402, 1986, Quality - Vocabulary), the quality of hotel business can be defined as the compatibility of hotel services with the guests expectations. It is a result of the caterers' ability to satisfy the tourist's demands. It comprises of the quality of all separate services offered by the hotel, determined by prescribed international standards.

Today the tourist is looking for a richer hotel product and the goal of the hotel shouldn't only be to reach that, but also to exceed the expectations. Thus, when designing the total hotel product one has to have in mind all its elements, because the guest doesn't evaluate the quality of his stay based only on tangible physical elements, but to him the relationship in the communication of hotel workers with guests, hospitality, speed and manner of serving, comfort, pleasant atmosphere, security etc., carry special significance.

This, on the other hand, leads to the conclusion that the creating of a quality hotel product is possible if managers have a good knowledge of the market and its three basic parameters: the current and the potential consumer, their own product

and the competition. Based on that information, the following steps are necessary in securing the quality:

- introduction and realization of quality standards;
- survey of guest's satisfaction;
- implementation of the guest's wishes and demands in one's products;
- constant control of the enterprise performances.

Considering the specific nature of the tourist product, which also includes the hotel product, the quality of the hotel offer can be expressed through several dimensions, most important being:

- the quality of products and services;
- the quality of working (process);
- the quality of organisation;
- the quality of management.

The unilateral treatment of the quality, having in mind its dimensions separately, doesn't correspond with the current modern economic movements. The contemporary efficient working expresses the need for the quality to be seen systematically, through the totality of the production process in the enterprise. All employees have obligations and responsibilities in achieving the quality. According to the European norms (ISO 8402), the quality system is an expression of an organised structure of responsibilities, actions, processes and resources necessary for providing quality. Its implementation into the total working process of hotel enterprises enables the managers to provide competitive advantage on the market through the total quality management of their offer. The quality system is the essence of the new concept of total quality management (TQM) whose application is more and more becoming a basic condition for successful and efficient working and as a result of that, a big challenge for the hotel enterprises.

TQM is widely accepted managerial approach, "a development ideology, philosophy, methods and action aimed at complete satisfaction of clients through continuous improvement...it is a way of life and way of work"<sup>1</sup>. It is based on the thesis: quality is created in all functions of the enterprise. Its nature is identified with organising the whole enterprise, each section, all working and business processes, all employees and every level of management. That's why, the total process and all employees must be included in the efforts for achieving quality, i.e. improving it.

The aim of TQM is to provide continuous product (service) quality, which will maximally satisfy the demands of the guests, with the lowest costs possible. Besides, the greatest attention is given to the connection and mutual cooperation of all participants in the hotel production process. Managers of all levels, especially top managers have the responsible role of changing the organisational culture, building a climate which directs the working towards the values and expectations of the guests. Their activity is directed, on one hand, towards the guests- current and potential tourists, and on the other towards the hotel employees. Within this, managers must be guided by the following nine principles:

- satisfying the demands of the consumer;
- conducting activities leading to quality improvement;

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<sup>1</sup> P. James, Total Quality Management, Prentice Hall, Hemel Hempstead, 1996

- education, advancement and animation of all employees in function of quality;
- establishing appropriate communication and teamwork, constantly ensuring that people create quality;
- all employees should know what is the goal of work, in function of quality improvement;
- the degree of the quality achieved is a measure of success;
- quality even in the first sale of services, since mistakes made here have the highest costs;
- quality management must be effective and beneficent;
  - appropriate behaviour is needed throughout the whole process, which is in function of improving the quality starting from the suppliers, the creators of services, all the way to providing the services to the consumers.

The basis of the total quality management system is the application of two management techniques – managing the technological and managing the human factor in the enterprise. Considering the limitation of high technology and automatic application in the tourist industry, the efficiency of this concept is greatly dependent upon the successful application of management techniques on the tourist enterprises human resources.

The application of the TQM concept in the tourist industry is carried out with greater difficulty and restriction compared to other areas of economy. This is a result of the nature, i.e. complexity and versatile structure of tourist offer, simultaneous occurrence of production and consumption of the tourist product, as well as the heterogeneous and fast changing demands of the consumers that is tourists. However, the effectiveness of the use of this concept is based on three principals:

- Focusing on guests, both domestic and foreign ones. This refers to focusing on meeting the needs and wishes of the tourists
- Cognitive improvement of the products, services, processes and the capabilities of the people involved in the process.
- Teamwork among the people involved in the creation of the hotel product.

Teamwork, as one of the principals in TQM, has a significant meaning. It means providing quality by team involvement in the process of creating services and solving problems of the managing and non-managing teams, the employees from all organizational parts of the hotel.

## 2. Teams and teamwork in the hotel business

Teams are becoming key tools in organizing work in hotels in the modern hotel business. They have the ability to quickly and efficiently solve problems, and at the same time, seem stimulating i.e. they motivate hotel employees to create a nice atmosphere where the tourist would be completely satisfied from the services offered. This comes from the fact that everyone has different attitudes and values, different character, different understanding of other people, everyone is motivated by different activities and has his/her own way in the work process. This is especially present in the hotel trade. How well the guests will be served and if they will ask for the hotels' services again, depends on how satisfied the employees are. This means

that it is necessary to find a way to efficiently use human resources in the hotel trade, and one of them is working in teams.

A team can be defined according to the work group consisting of different professional personnel that act together in order to reach certain goals. Specific characteristics of the team are the following:

- an active group of people with common goals
- the members cooperate in harmony
- the group achieves great results

A very important thing regarding teams and teamwork is that people become members of a group for a reason. Managers have to be aware when teams are organized in order to obtain team efficiency. Some of them can be seen in the following list:<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ International appeal-people join the group because they have been won over by other group-members.
- ✓ Group activities-the will to participate in the group's activities and carrying them out
- ✓ The group's goal-a common reason to join a group is its goal, which at the same time is the interest of all the members and by working in a group you can achieve much more than by working individually.
- ✓ Security and socializing-working in a group answers the needs for belonging and respect
- ✓ Obtaining a certain status, self-respect and satisfaction
- ✓ Power-groups can have power, influence and resources, which are important factors to reach the wanted goals.

Teamwork gives great contribution to the managing of hotel activities. Several characteristics can be outlined that make the field of hotel management very interesting, especially the ones that have international character and are faced with multiculturalism in their work and the need for mutual dealing with problems and questions. In this way:

- The team gains responsibility and every member is responsible for his/her own job but also for the working of the team.
- They solve problems together by thinking, discussing and making decisions.
- As a form of participation of the employees in making decisions, the members are motivated to involve more creativity, to come up with new ideas and a bigger number of alternative solutions.
- Ideas are observed and participants' opinions are re-evaluated which shows existing problems and development of new ideas.
- Information is being conveyed and exchanged between the team members.
- Teamwork provides greater flexibility of the hotel.
- It stimulates increase of productivity, decrease of work leave, increase of product and service quality, security and satisfaction of the employees.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Nikolic, Personalni menagment (hotelijerstvo, restoraterstvo, gastrologija), Meridijan, Beograd.

-Involving the members of different organization units in the team enables coordination of activities of different organization units, their policies and plans and their synchronized execution.

-It raises the enthusiasm to accept and deliver decisions.

Hotels form different types of teams. Some of them include only management personnel, others, non-management teams, but most of them include both. They can be of formal and informal character.

When it comes to groups and teams as part of a hotel, usually it refers to of formal character. Managers form the formal teams and they are a symbol of official relationships between the employees which determines their authority, duty, power and responsibility. They consist of tasks for every individual in the group and the communication between the members. These teams are part of the formal organization of hotels and that is why they are more stable than informal teams.

Formal teams are organized as horizontal or vertical teams. Vertical teams are a group consisting of a manager and his/her subordinates in a formal chain of command. They are called functional or command teams and they include employees from more or a few levels of the hierarchy structure in the functional department division.

Horizontal teams are groups that include employees from the same or similar hierarchy level, but from different professions and organization parts of the hotel. They are committees (commissions) or project teams (teams with special purposes). The committees usually last for a longer period of time and deal with regular problems and decisions. Project teams have a temporary character and are formed in order to deal with a specific project or task. After solving the problem, the team is usually dismissed. These teams have significant meaning and great use in the current conditions of the complicated and turbulent surroundings of hotel business nowadays.

**Informal teams** are groups that develop in the formal organization structure and emerge from mutual informal communication between employees in the firm. They are usually interesting and friendly groups. Because of this characteristic of their nature they are more flexible than formal teams regarding membership. These teams can contribute to the quality of the execution of hotel activities, but they can also create an unpleasant atmosphere for working and they are not working enough on the quality of hotel services.

The modern management is developing a category of teams known as super teams. They include characteristics both from formal and informal teams. Super teams are groups of 3-30 employees from different sectors of the firm that solve problems together that employees face every day. Very often they are also called self-management teams because they manage themselves without any formal control over them. The members of these teams prepare their working dynamic, they determine the rate of productivity, provide themselves with equipment and materials they need, they take care of the improvement of quality of their products and services, they cooperate with other super teams and customers, they plan the dynamics of



development, decide on employment and personnel training. Main characteristic of the super teams are:<sup>1</sup>

- The team is responsible for “almost the entire task”;
- All the team’s members have different qualifications needed for finishing the task;
- The team is authorized to make decisions about: working methods, working dynamics and naming other members for the task’s purposes;
- On the basis of its labor output the group as a whole determines the allowances.

International hotel companies have the opportunity to manage their activities on the global market with these teams. The development of technology and global movements in the socioeconomic and political sphere affirm the development of international self-managing teams, known as virtual teams. Virtual teams are an opportunity to efficiently manage the quality of hotel services in international hotel chains but also in all the other forms of vertical integration of hotels on the global market.

### 3. Working climate as a factor for the success of the team

Productivity of the team is conditioned by a good working climate. Development of a good climate demands intensive managing on one side, and support from the team members, on the other. One precondition for a positive working climate are balanced working relationships; avoiding work overload of the team members; it is necessary to create a team statute, in which the rules about common behaviour will be established, like punctuality and having breaks; the managing staff should be an example of proper behaviour that others need to follow; all members of the team have to be assessed equally, regardless to their status at work, in order to feel that they are taken seriously by the others; the team has to develop mutual trust and trust in the leader. That is why private life topics should be avoided. Also, internal conversations mustn’t leave the circle of the team and shouldn’t be talked about outside the team. It is of great importance to avoid talking about the leader. The team members have to be aware and learn to use the value of finding a diversity of solutions. Synergy plays a lead role in this. Every participant use his/her methods and giving credit. The team members have the occasional need to be assessed and given credit for their work they have covered. Much more can be reached by praising rather than by criticizing.

### 4. Maximizing the effectiveness of teams

There are a few basic factors which are crucial to reach team effectiveness. Among these, the most important ones are: the size of the team, the level of cohesiveness of the team and the level of consensus among the members, the established team norms (their behavior in the team) and the status or position of every member in the team. These factors can easily contribute to the effectiveness of

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<sup>1</sup>Charles C. Manz i Henry P. Sims, Jr, “Leading Workers to Lead Themselves: The External Leadership of Self-Managing Work Teams”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32 (1987)

the team in homogenous groups in relation to international teams that are multicultural. In multicultural teams the team leader has a task to create a participation group behavior, to minimize conflict between members in a constructive manner and to act as a mediator who would support and encourage team activities and not command the members. The team leader's task is complicated because he/she has to minimize conflict as well as extract different ideas and opinions that team members have. In multicultural teams, two types of conflict can occur: cognitive and affective. Cognitive conflicts are disagreements between team members and difference of opinions shared by open communication and discussion. These conflicts refer to the finding the best solution for a certain problem and making the best team decision and they don't represent personal disagreement and attacks between the team members. That is why cognitive conflicts are usually constructive and result in making better decisions and even strengthen the relationship in the team. Affective conflicts are personal misunderstandings, intolerance and hostility among members. These conflicts do not aim for the achievement of the team's goals but are offending the individual. These conflicts have a destructive effect on the team's work. If this occurs inside the team, the team leader has to efficiently manage the team meaning he/she has to create a model of teamwork which will be based on individual engagement of the members that will lead to a consolidated team process. This involves for main activities:<sup>1</sup>

- **Maintaining focused activities**, behavior should be channeled into creating a vision of the team i.e. a clearly set purpose of the joint working of all members in the team. The vision is included in the programs with the main goals of the team and not to allow asking insignificant questions which could lead members to be led by their personal interests.
- **To encourage creativity**, to encourage individual thinking in order to find new unexpected solutions to the problem. The team leader can direct the group behavior towards accepting different opinions and to use it to build new options that emerge from the mutual experience of the team.
- **To exercise open communication**, to create a climate of free expression of individuals, different opinions and misunderstanding which is natural for teamwork, but without personal conflicts. Open dialogue and discussion have to be led.
- **To support integration**, in spite of the different opinions among team members, the differences in their engagement, the team leader has to set balance by engaging everyone and at the same time protecting the team from the dominance of certain individuals. This should maintain the internal relationship in the group, by active participation of the members in solving tasks. The manager has to develop a sense of belonging in every team member.

These directions that seem to be simple are in fact conducted in practice over a longer period of time. There are two main reasons for that. One of them is that the national culture of the team members influences the team's efficiency. The other one

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. D-r Milija Zecevic, International Management, Fakultet za internacionalni menadzment, Beograd, 1999

is that the attitude towards team work is different in different countries. That is why hotels find it difficult to arrange teamwork quickly and easily, but have a long period of adjusting.

#### 5. Analysis of the Obtained Survey Data

In order to get acquainted with the hotels located on the Ohrid Riviera, research has been conducted in renowned hotels such as Hotel Metropol, Hotel Beton, Hotel Sileks, Hotel Belvedere, Hotel Millennium. The survey was conducted by interviewing 25 managers, 7 of the top management, 10 mid-level managers and 8 heads of reception, kitchen chefs and heads of the hall.

The main goal was to get answers about the following questions:

Question 1: Do managers make decisions individually or as a team?	Answer in %
As a team	67
Individually	33
Total	100

Bearing in mind that 67% of the respondents answered this question affirmatively, it can be concluded that the team work is especially applicable when making the decisions in the hotel business.

Question 2. Do managers from different levels cooperate with each other?	Answer in %
Yes	60
Sometimes	27
No	13
Total	100

On this question, 60% of respondents answered that the problems they face during working are resolved in consultation with their co-workers, which is a good indicator that teamwork is being applied in the hotels that are the main group of this research.

Question 3. Do the higher level managers take into consideration the opinion given by the lower level managers?	Answer in %
Yes	70
Partly	13
No	7
Total	100

70% of the answers received are affirmative, indicating that the reputation of the team members has a very important role in the success of that team.

Question 4. Do the managers respect the rest of the employees in the decision-making process?	Answer in %
Yes	100
No	0
Total	100

The answer to this question is 100% affirmative, indicating that the team members feel extremely responsible for the overall operation of the hotels.

Question 5. Is the company taking care of the cohesiveness of the managerial teams?	Answer in %
Yes	80
No	20
Total	100

80% gave affirmative answers to this question, which points to the fact that the cohesiveness of the managerial teams is on a very high level, which means that they have the same moral principles, goals, work assignments, motivation.

Question 6. Does the team work contribute to the quality of the hotel offer?	Answer in %
Yes	85
No	15
Total	100

85% of the respondents answered that teamwork contributes to raising the quality of the hotel offer, which indicates the high awareness of the respondents in terms of the positive sides of the teamwork.

Question 7. Are you satisfied with the success of the hotel?	Answer in %
Yes, but I am trying to achieve higher results	66
Partly, but our goal is to achieve better results with our work	31
No	3
Total	100

The answers to this question suggest that the teams are satisfied with the success of the hotel's operation, and these people constantly put the working of the hotel on the first place and at a higher level.

Question 8. Do you think you are a creative person?	Odgovor vo %
Yes	98

No	2
Total	100

The very high percentage of affirmative responses to this question suggests that the team members are dedicated to creating new ideas, seeking for solutions to overcome problems.

Question . Are innovations an important part of the hotel's work?	Answer in %
Yes, the existing offer is good and attractive	64
Yes, I always think about improving the hotel's offer	34
Total	100

The answers to this question point to the conclusion that innovations are viewed from a positive aspect, but only 34% of the respondents think that an improvement of the hotel offer should be taken into account.

Prasanje 10. Does the hotel have a climate of interdisciplinary professional competition?	Answer in %
Yes	58
Sometimes	36
No	6
Total	100

The purpose of the teamwork is to encourage professional competence. Most of the managers state that teams are those that stimulate the professional competence. The percentage of those that sometimes create this climate is also huge.

If we sublimate the answers to the given questions, it can be concluded that in the hotels that are subject of this research, the decisions are result of a teamwork, the problems are resolved by the managers in consultation with the co-workers, at the same time the teams have a reputation among the employees. Timskoto rabotenje e pozitivno od aspekt na uspesnoto rabotenje na hotelot, no se pak ima prostor da se raboti na negovoto unapreduvanje.

The teamwork is positive from the aspect of the successful operation of the hotel, but still there is room for improvement.

## Conclusion

With the application of the quality standards a hotel product quality is built from the aspect of the creators of that product. However, the quality is built both from the aspect of the tourists as consumers of that product, and it represents the degree of satisfying their demands and wishes. Considering the fact that consumers are the sole judges of quality, managing the quality signifies a constant adaptation of

the working in the hotel according to the expectations of tourists. Managing the quality in the hotel business is prescribed by international standards, and they themselves represent a prescribed quality, but also a measure of achieving quality. The economic benefit from implementing the standards in that industry can be seen in: growth of income, increase in profitability of the tourist subject, limiting total costs, improvement of service quality, increase in management efficiency, improvement in work organization, increase of tourist satisfaction, but also of employees etc.

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